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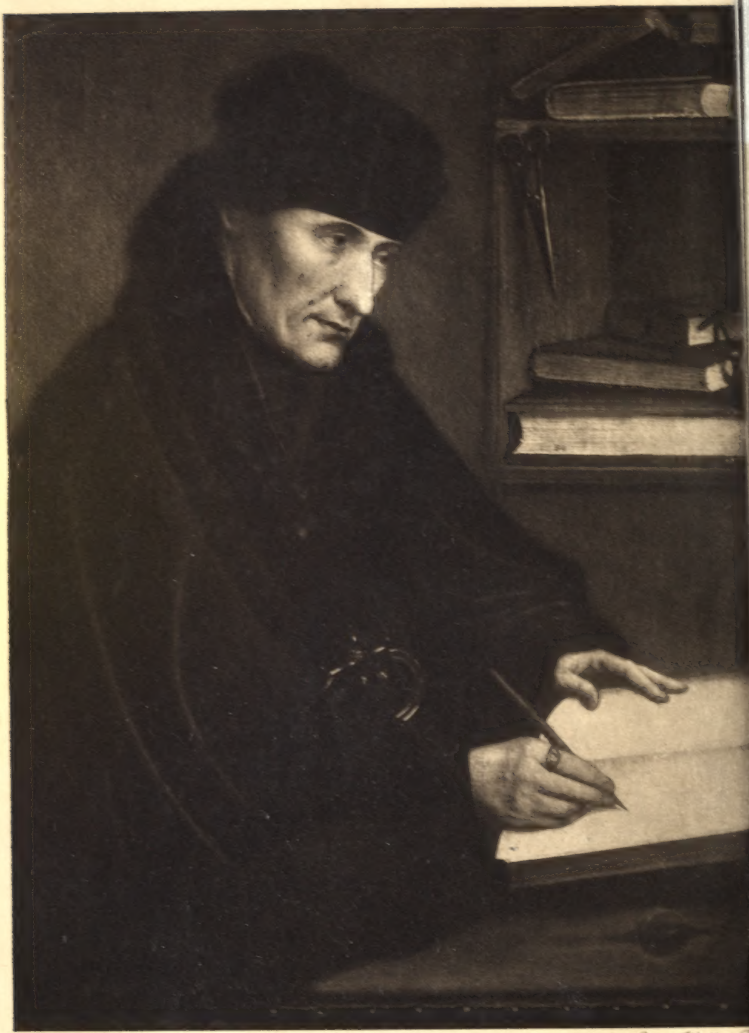

Quentin Matsys pinxit. Emery Walker Sc.

Erasmus
aet. 50

From the Diptych painted in May 1517 for presentation to Thomas More

Desiderius Erasmus Moriae Encomium

THE PRAISE OF FOLLY

Written by *ERASMUS* 1509 and translated by *JOHN WILSON* 1668

Edited
with an Introduction by
MRS. P. S. ALLEN

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INTRODUCTION

THE Praise of Folly is a part of the so-called 'Fool Literature' produced by the ferment of new ideas which preceded the Reformation. Men had discovered fresh standards, old formulas were tested, and the discrepancies between principle and practice became more apparent. There was a widespread attempt to cure the evils which had crept into the mediaeval Church and those which vitiated the body politic. Satire is a sharp instrument to cut away the blinding film of custom, and writers strove to convince a fool of his folly by showing him himself. Yet human nature is slow to change, it is easier to see faults than to amend them: in the twentieth century men are very much as they were in the fifteenth, still, for instance, buying books which they do not read, like the first fool who embarked in the 'Narrenschiff'.

This was the title of the book which set the fashion in fools. Its author, Sebastian Brant

(1458–1521), was a Strasburg inn-keeper's son, who, having taken his degree in law, added to his legal work great literary activity in Bergmann von Olpe's press at Basel. Brant conceived the idea of a ship laden with fools, about to set sail for the land of Narragonia; but he grew so interested in depicting the crew that the ship was forgotten and never left its port. The 'Narrenschiff' was published in 1494, and its success was immediate. The 112 several kinds of fools, described with blunt realism, gave men opportunity to recognize their neighbours' portraits, and delightedly to fit caps on other heads. The book was further welcomed for its moral value, and was even used as the text for a series of sermons given by a famous Strasburg preacher.

Despite his scholarship, Brant had written in his own Swabian dialect as the best medium for reaching the mass of his countrymen. But contempt for 'the vulgar and vernacular' did not keep the learned world from interest; and the moment the book appeared, Trithemius added it to Brant's Latin works in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers, calling it a 'divine satire'. In 1497 it became accessible to the

educated of all countries when Locher Philomusus translated it into Latin, under the title, 'Stultifera Navis.' The same year Pierre Rivière made a French version, 'La Nef des Folz du Monde;' and the Belgian, Badius Ascensius, later renowned as a printer at Paris, was stirred up to attempt a sequel. Brant had dealt with men only, but Badius felt that women should not be left out, and his 'Stultiferae Naves' added six shiploads of foolish virgins to the fleet. The book was sent to Angilbert de Marnef, the Paris publisher, with a request for a translation into French, 'so that women might read it for their salutary discipline, and instruction in a holy life.' Jean Drouyn, who had just published a paraphrase of Rivière's translation, gladly undertook the work; but he amplified it till his 'Nef des Folles' came out half as big again as the 'Stultiferae Naves'. Four French editions of Badius's book and one Latin were printed in three and a half years; but still he was not satisfied, and in 1505 he made another Latin version of Brant's 'Narrenschiff', naming it 'Navis Stultifera', an inversion of Locher's title.

These repeated reproductions made the 'Narrenschiff' well known in England, and in 1509 two English translations appeared. The first of these, 'The grete shyppe of fooles of this worlde,' was a prose version, made from the 'rethoryke Frensshe' of Drouyn by one Henry Watson. His own prologue tells all that is known of him. He was young, 'indygne and symple of vnderstandynge,' conscious of his imperfect training: 'ye tendernes of my yeres hathe so affusked me that I haue not applyed me vnto the lettres as I ought to haue done.' The work was entrusted to him by his 'worshypfull mayster Wynkyn de Worde, thrughe the entysement & exhortacyon of the excellent prynces Margarete, countesse of Rychemonde and Derby', the Lady Margaret whose professors still lecture at Oxford and Cambridge, 'grandame vnto our moost naturall souerayne lorde kynge Henry ye viii, whome Ihesu preserue from all encombraunce.' Watson's translation, though reprinted in 1517, is now almost forgotten: one copy of his first edition alone survives, in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris.

A far more famous work is the ' Shyp of folys of the worlde, translated in the College of saynt mary Otery in the counte of Deuonshyre : out of Laten, Frenche and Doche into Englysshe tonge by Alexander Barclay, Preste and at that tyme Chaplen in the sayde College '. Barclay was a young man when in 1508 to ' auoyde the execrable inconuenyences of ydilnes ' he began his rhymed translation at the advice of his patron, Thomas Cornish, Provost of Oriel and Bishop Suffragan of Bath. It is a remarkably free translation, even in an age which did not demand literal adherence to an original ; so free that Barclay felt it necessary to apologize for it. ' Concernynge the translacion of this Boke, I exhort ye reders to take no displesour for y^t^ it is nat translated word by worde acordinge to ye verses of my actour. For I haue but only drawen into our moder tunge in rude langage the sentences of the verses as nere as the parcyte of my wyt wyl suffer me, some tyme addynge, somtyme detractinge and takinge away suche thinges a semeth me necessary and superflue.' Barclay's additions are very interesting, for he drew largely on his own experience,

including among the fools many whom he knew personally. With the eye of disapproving youth on the sporting cleric he wrote :

'For if one can flater and bere a hawke on his Fyst,
He shalbe made Person of Honyngton or of Clyst.'

When dealing with the fool 'that nought can and nought wyll lerne' he bethought him of his companions, the 'secundaries' in the college at Ottery :

'I haue eyght neyghbours, that firste shall haue a place
Within this my shyp, for they most worthy be.
They may theyr lernynge receyue costeles and fre,
Theyr wallys abuttynge and ioynynge to the scoles.
No thynge they can, yet nought wyll they lerne nor se.'

As a result of Barclay's treatment the German element in the 'Narrenschiff' was effaced and the 'Shyp of Folys' became a British bark. His fools are dressed in the national motley, and give a vivid picture of Pre-Reformation England. Side by side with Locher's Latin, the new translation was 'Inprentyd in the Cyte of

London in Fletestre at the signe of Saynt George By Rycharde Pynson to hys Coste and charge: Ended the yere of our Sauiour M. d. ix. The .xiiii. day of December'. There were thus two English versions of the 'Narrenschiff' appearing in London just when the 'Praise of Folly' was being composed there.

Erasmus must have known of this mass of 'Fool literature' and have comprehended the point of view; but his own contribution has all the originality of genius. When he wrote it he was 43, and had lived in many lands, among diverse kinds of men. Born at Rotterdam of an unmarried mother, he learnt the elements at Gouda, until his voice gained him a place in the choir at Utrecht; whence he went to the famous school at Deventer, then attracting scholars from all parts of Europe. His parents' early death, the dissipation of his small patrimony by his guardians, and their consequent pressure, drove him into a monastery of the Augustinian Canons at Steyn, near Gouda. But he hated monastic life, he chafed at the narrowness of his surroundings, and he made a way of escape. He used his opportunities for study

until he attracted the notice of the Bishop of Cambray, who took him as a secretary and then sent him to the University of Paris. Once free, Erasmus was not to be caught again. He remained a priest, but he would not re-enter the monastery. In Paris he lived poorly and worked hard, chiefly at his own studies, though he was driven to teach that he might have money to buy books.

Relief came from this drudgery when one of his pupils, Lord Mountjoy, invited him to England. He stayed in London, went down to a country house in Hertfordshire, and visited the Ropers in their home at Well Hall in Kent : whence he walked with More to Eltham and was received at the Palace by the royal children. In the autumn he paid a short visit to Oxford, and stayed in St. Mary's College, the house of his order. It was at this time that he formed his life-long friendships with Colet, Grocyn, Linacre, and More ; to whom were added later Warham and Fisher, William Latimer, Tunstall and Pace. Like all scholars of the Renaissance he had long had the ambition to go to Italy, but poverty had kept him distant. His

English friends determined to satisfy his desire, and between them gave him money for the journey. But he had reckoned without the law revived by Henry VII, forbidding the export of precious metals; the custom-house officers at Dover took his gold, and left him to embark with a limp purse and an angry heart. It was a bitter blow, one which Erasmus could never forgive nor forget; and years afterwards he wrote of his spoliation as vehemently as if the incident had but just happened.

Italy out of his reach, Erasmus had to settle again at Paris, with occasional flights to the Netherlands or to Orleans, when plague raged in the capital. In 1505 his English friends persuaded him to revisit them, and arranged a more successful plan for reaching his Italian goal. The sons of Boerio, the Genoese physician of Henry VII, were returning home, and Erasmus was appointed their tutor. At last in the summer of 1506 he could cross the Alps. The first step was to take his doctor's degree at Turin, and then the party went on to Bologna. His studies there were rudely interrupted by the papal siege, which drove him and his pupils

to flight. They retired to Florence, but returned in time to see the triumphant entry of Pope Julius II. Erasmus was always a preacher of peace; convinced of the wrongfulness of war, he inveighed against it with all his eloquence; the spectacle of the Head of the Church conducting a campaign and plunging men into misery filled him with horror. In the 'Moria', still more in the 'Julius Exclusus', he spoke his indignation without respect of persons.

While at Bologna Erasmus was busied with his collection of 'Adages'. These had been first printed during his Paris years, but now the little book was worked up into a big book, and Erasmus went to Venice to see the new edition published. It was produced by Aldus, the famous printer, in whose family Erasmus spent a year of strenuous work. When it ended, he left Venice to go south; and at Siena joined Alexander Stewart, the young Archbishop of St. Andrews, who later fell with his father, James IV, at Flodden. With this pupil Erasmus visited Rome and Naples, enjoying with equal keenness the interest of classic sites or the discussion of modern politics with the high officials of the Curia. It

is even probable that the influence of Cardinal Grimani might have kept him at Rome, had not the death of Henry VII on 21 April 1509 changed the whole aspect of affairs in England. The young king was no mean scholar; he was favourable to the new studies, and ready to listen to the wise advice offered him. He could recognize talent and employ it. Erasmus's English friends were eager that he should share both the work and the profit of the new era: urgent letters, with messages from the king, called him to London. He was not slow in answering. He journeyed on horseback from Rome to Bologna, and thence over the Swiss passes to Constance and Strasburg, and so by boat down the Rhine to Antwerp and England. Day by day, as he went, he pondered on the world as he had seen it, on Folly in high places and in low.

On reaching London he was welcomed at More's house in Bucklersbury. His host, who had nearly been forced to flee the country on account of his resistance to Henry VII's exactions, was high in favour with the new king, and having been made under-sheriff of the City,

could carry on his own practice as a lawyer without fear of molestation. The home-life there was at its happiest, since the son gentle Mistress More had longed for, had been added to the nursery of three little girls. In these bright surroundings chequered only by his ill health Erasmus wrote the 'Moriae Encomium', in praise of Folly. In a letter from Antwerp, May 1515, he says: 'I was staying with More after my return from Italy, when I was kept several days in the house by lumbago. My library had not yet arrived; and if it had, my illness forbade exertion in more serious studies. So, for want of employment, I began to amuse myself with the Praise of Folly, not with the intention of publishing the result, but to relieve the discomfort of sickness by this sort of distraction. I showed a specimen of the unfinished work to some friends, in order to heighten the enjoyment of the ridiculous by sharing it. They were mightily pleased, and insisted on my going on. I complied, and spent some seven days upon the work; an expenditure of time which I thought out of proportion to the importance of the subject. Afterwards the same persons

who had encouraged me to write, contrived to have the book taken to France and printed, but from a copy not only faulty but incomplete. The failure of the work to please the public was sufficiently shown by its being propagated in type more than seven times in a few months, and that in different places ; I wondered myself what people found to like in it.' [1]

This account of the first edition cannot be taken as correct. It was the convention of the age to affect modesty by disclaiming all responsibility for publication, and the friends who printed the book without Erasmus's knowledge were a polite fiction. Probably Erasmus himself took the 'Moria' to Paris on his brief visit in the spring of 1511, at any rate he was there when it was being printed. What he had been doing in the interval from his arrival at More's house in the late summer of 1509 is not known. For eighteen months there is no record of him until he writes from Dover on his way to France. Probably he was living with More, working at Jerome and the New Testament, discussing projects of reform and advising means for

[1] Epistles of Erasmus, tr. Nichols, vol. ii, p. 5.

carrying them out. He was urgent for the foundation of public, as opposed to private schools, under which he included those of monasteries and colleges; and he took much interest in Colet's school at St. Paul's, which was to educate 153 boys, the number of the miraculous draught of fishes.

That the 'Praise of Folly', written in 1509, was not published till June 1511, is easily to be understood. What is surprising is that Erasmus should ever have ventured to publish, in his own name, so bold an attack on the abuses in Church and State. His next work of this kind, the 'Julius Exclusus', appeared anonymously. Erasmus not only refused to acknowledge it, but tried to father it on to other writers: so skilfully indeed that without explicitly declaring he was not the author, he managed to convey this impression. But under Folly's mask he was brave enough. Fools had the right of free speech, and made sport by telling men home truths. In Germany the greatest licence was allowed to players, dressed in motley, who on Carnival night roamed the streets and made their way into private houses. The 'Sottie',

or fools' play, was a recognized part of the drama in France. 'Le jeu du Prince des Sotz, Et mère sotte; Ioué aux halles de Paris le mardy gras, Lan mil cinq cens et vnze' (February 24, 1512, n.s.) attacked in its 'Sottie' Louis XII, 'le Prince des Sotz'; and in its 'Moralité' abused the Pope, 'l'homme obstiné', as cause of all the ills tormenting 'Peuple françois' and 'Peuple ytalique'. But Folly's freedom hurt no one. The French king witnessed this performance and bore no malice.

The Pope was as little affected by the hard things that Folly said of him. In January 1518 Erasmus writes: 'The Pope himself read the Moria and laughed. His only comment was this: "I am glad our Erasmus is in the Moria himself;" and yet I deal with no one more scathingly than with the Popes.' A month before in a letter to the powerful Abbot of St. Bertin's at St. Omer, he said: 'This work, such as it is, pleases the learned of the whole world; it pleases bishops, archbishops, kings, cardinals, and Pope Leo himself, who has read the whole of it from beginning to end.' The theologians, of course, were indignant; one

of them, Martin Dorp, a young lecturer at Louvain, reproved him for treating sacred things with undue levity and urged him to consider, if nothing else, at least his own reputation. 'Formerly every one admired your writings; but now this wretched Moria, like Dauus in the play, is upsetting everything.' Erasmus defended himself in a long apology, but the theologians were never satisfied. Twenty years later a Spaniard, Caruaialus, compared him to the lawyer who, feigning madness, had stirred up the Sicilians to a massacre of the French. 'Erasmus', he wrote bitterly, 'in the guise of a jester is destroying the whole Church with his quips and jokes.'

Erasmus must have seen Brant's 'Narrenschiff' and Badius's 'Stultiferae Naves', but his 'Praise of Folly' is in no sense an imitation. The satire is far more subtle. Folly, in cap and bells, is made to mount the rostrum and sing her own praises. She is shown as the laughing goddess, whose very appearance lightens men's hearts and spurs them to greater achievements than the calculations of reason. Erasmus delights in making the worse appear the better

part, in proving that the dotards and lack-wits are the truly happy, and wise men miserable. Friendship is inspired by Folly, since no man could be friends with another, did he not foolishly overlook his faults. It is the blindness of Folly which makes matrimony possible; the gaiety of Folly livens society; by her flattery cities are founded and empires held together. 'There is no way to that so much famed wisdom, nor access to that fortress, as they call it, of happiness but under the banner of Folly.'

As he continued, Erasmus's mood changed. He had started lightly, but his sense of the real folly of mankind overcame his lightness. His mocking banter passes into stern arraignment of the men he knew: the hunting men who 'become beasts themselves, while yet they imagine they live the life of princes'; the men who have the 'itch of building', till they spend all their fortune; the seekers after new inventions, the gamesters and the superstitious. The grammarians, tormenting the boys in their schools, brag as though they had conquered Africa, if they 'happen to find out who was Anchises's Mother, or pick out of some worm-

eaten Manuscript a word not commonly known, as suppose it Bubsequa, for a Cowheard'. The logicians, the philosophers, the divines are dealt with yet more severely; princes and their courtiers are ridiculed; and at last, cardinals and the very Pope himself are shown their follies with a fine directness. John Knox scarcely spoke plainer to the Queen of Scots. But the 'Moria' ends, as it had begun, with mockery; from a satire it passes back to an oration, and Erasmus whimsically proves that Solomon, St. Paul, even Christ Himself sang the praises of Folly. This is done by a twisting of Bible phrases displeasing to modern taste, which brought Erasmus sharp censure in his own day.

Over forty editions of the 'Praise of Folly' were issued during its author's lifetime; the chief publishers were glad to print it, and smaller presses copied their editions. Froben first published it in 1515, embedded in notes, which though ostensibly by Lystrius were in part written by Erasmus himself. Holbein illustrated it with the famous pen and ink sketches, since so often reproduced. It was translated from the original Latin into French

in 1517, into Italian in 1539, into English ten years later, and into German, Dutch, and Flemish before the end of the century. It has since appeared in Swedish, Danish, Czech, Russian, Polish, and Modern Greek. That there is no Spanish translation before 1842 is remarkable, for Erasmus's other works were widely read in Spain.

The English translation of 1549 was made by Sir Thomas Chaloner, diplomatist and scholar, knighted for his bravery at Pinkie, and has been more than once reprinted, the last time in 1901. Another well-known translation, 'Witt against Wisdom, or a Panegyrick upon Folly,' was made in 1683 by White Kennett, then a young B.A. of St. Edmund Hall, later its Principal and afterwards Bishop of Peterborough. The twentieth century can appreciate Chaloner's work, but to the Stuarts he seemed so old-fashioned as to be almost unintelligible. White Kennett says in his introduction: 'Our language hath been so much polish'd, and refin'd, since the first appearance of this Declamation in English, that had it fallen into my hands e're I entred on this work, the perusal of it would

have scarcely discourag'd me from pursuing the undertaking: For to have adventured abroad a second Edition of this antiquated Version, would doubtless have been interpreted as a design rather of exercising the Reader in the unpleasant task of laboriously picking out the meaning of obsolete words, and expressions, than of fairly leading him into the true and genuine sense of the Original; although what is here asserted might be easily made out beyond all possibility of exception, yet the learned Author acquitted himself so very well herein, that he comes fully up even to the most commendable way of writing, which obtain'd in his time.'

The translation now reprinted was made in 1668 by John Wilson (1627?–1696), scholar, lawyer, and writer of plays. He was well known for his ultra-royalist views, which gained him favour with the Duke of York and a post in Ireland, but better known for his comedies, 'The Cheats' and 'The Projectors', where rascality is happily described. His version is more direct and restrained than 'Witt against Wisdom'; or as Kennett himself puts it, 'The modern Translator (Wilson) . . . tied himself . . .

strictly to a literal observance of the Latin . . .; whereas in this Rehearsal of mine, I have . . . allowed my self such elbow-room of expression as the humoursomness of the Subject and the Idiom of each language did invite, if not command.' Kennett in consequence is long-winded and prosy, and his 'elbow-room' has resulted in a coarseness of expression surprising in a future Church dignitary: yet his distinguished position gained his book the popularity of continued reprints. Wilson's, with its truer though faint echo of Erasmus's terse vivacity, was neglected until recently edited by Dr. Rouse. A translation made in 1878 by James Copner, late vicar of Elstow, proves that the 'Moria' has not lost its attraction for modern scholars.

In this edition Wilson's spelling has been retained, but for the convenience of modern readers the old punctuation has been altered and the text divided into paragraphs. Some disagreeable phrases have been omitted, and a few obvious mis-translations corrected, where possible in Chaloner's words. The correction on p. 110, 'Sthenelus' for 'Stelenus', has been adopted from Dr. Kan.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

To his Friend

THOMAS MORE, Health:

AS I was coming a while since out of Italy for England, that I might not waste all that time I was to sit on Horsback in foolish and illiterate Fables, I chose rather one while to revolve with my self something of our common Studies, and other while to enjoy the remembrance of my Friends, of whom I left here some no lesse learned than pleasant. Amongst these you, my More, came first in my mind, whose memory, though absent your self, gives me such delight in my absence, as when present with you I ever found in your company; than which, let me perish if in all my life I ever met with any thing more delectable. And therefore, being satisfy'd that something was to be done, and that that time was no wise proper for any serious matter, I resolv'd to make

some sport with The Praise of Folly. But who the Devil put that in thy head ? you'l say. The first thing was your sirname of More, which comes so near the word *Moriæ* (Folly) as you are far from the thing. And that you are so, all the world will clear you. In the next place, I conceiv'd this exercise of wit would not be least approv'd by you ; inasmuch as you are wont to be delighted with such kind of mirth, that is to say, neither unlearned, if I am not mistaken, nor altogether insipid, and in the whole course of your life have play'd the part of a Democritus. And though such is the excellence of your Judgement that 'twas ever contrary to that of the people's, yet such is your incredible affability and sweetness of temper that you both can and delight to carry your self to all men a man of all hours. Wherefore you will not only with good will accept this small Declamation, but take upon you the defence of 't, forasmuch as being dedicated to you, it is now no longer mine but yours. But perhaps there will not be wanting some wranglers that may cavil and charge me, partly that these toyes are lighter than may become a Divine,

and partly more biting than may beseem the modesty of a Christian, and consequently exclaim that I resemble the Ancient Comedy, or another Lucian, and snarle at every thing. But I would have them whom the lightness or foolery of the Argument may offend, to consider that mine is not the first of this kind, but the same thing that has been often practis'd even by great Authors: when Homer, so many Ages since, did the like with the battel of Frogs and Mice; Virgil, with the Gnat, and Puddings; Ovid, with the Nut; when Polycrates, and his Corrector Isocrates, extol'd Tyranny; Glauco, Injustice; Favorinus, Deformity, and the quartan Ague; Synescius, Baldness; Lucian, the Fly, and Flattery; when Seneca made such sport with Claudius's Canonizations; Plutarch, with his Dialogue between Ulysses and Gryllus; Lucian and Apuleius, with the Asse; and some other, I know not who, with the Hog that made his last Will and Testament, of which also, even S. Jerome makes mention. And therefore if they please, let 'em suppose I play'd at Tables for my diversion, or if they had rather have it so, that I rod on

a Hobby-horse. For what injustice is it, that when we allow every course of life its Recreation, that Study only should have none? especially when such toyes are not without their serious matter, and foolery is so handled that the Reader that is not altogether thick-skull'd may reap more benefit from 't than from some men's crabbish and specious Arguments. As when one, with long study and great pains, patches many pieces together on the praise of Rhetorick or Philosophy; another makes a Panegyrick to a Prince; another encourages him to a War against the Turks; another tells you what will become of the world after himself is dead; and another finds out some new device for the better ordering of Goat's-wooll: for as nothing is more trifling than to treat of serious matters triflingly, so nothing carries a better grace, than so to discourse of trifles as a man may seem to have intended them least. For my own part, let other men judge of what I have written; though yet, unlesse an overweening opinion of my self may have made me blind in my own cause, I have prais'd Folly, but not altogether foolishly. And now to say

somewhat to that other cavil, of biting. This liberty was ever permitted to all men's wits, to make their smart witty reflections on the common errors of mankind, and that too without offence, as long as this liberty does not run into licentiousness; which makes me the more admire the tender ears of the men of this age, that can away with solemn Titles. Nay, you'l meet with some so preposterously religious, that they will sooner endure the broadest scoffs even against Christ himself, than hear the Pope or a Prince be toucht in the least, especially if it be any thing that concerns their profit; whereas he that so taxes the lives of men, without naming any one in particular, whither, I pray, may he be said to bite, or rather to teach and admonish? Or otherwise, I beseech ye, under how many notions do I tax my self? Besides, he that spares no sort of men cannot be said to be angry with any one in particular, but the vices of all. And therefore, if there shall happen to be any one that shall say he is hit, he will but discover either his guilt or fear. Saint Jerome sported in this kind with more freedome and greater sharpnesse, not sparing sometimes men's

very name. But I, besides that I have wholly avoided it, I have so moderated my stile, that the understanding Reader will easily perceive my endeavours herein were rather to make mirth than bite. Nor have I, after the Example of Juvenal, raked up that forgotten sink of filth and ribaldry, but laid before you things rather ridiculous than dishonest. And now, if there be any one that is yet dissatisfied, let him at least remember that it is no dishonour to be discommended by Folly; and having brought her in speaking, it was but fit that I kept up the character of the person. But why do I run over these things to you, a person so excellent an Advocate that no man better defends his Client, though the cause many times be none of the best? Farewell, my best disputant More, and stoutly defend your Moriæ.

From the Country,
the 5th of the Ides of June.

MORIÆ ENCOMIUM

OR

THE PRAISE OF FOLLY

An Oration, of feigned matter, spoken by Folly in her own Person

AT what rate soever the World talks of me (for I am not ignorant what an ill report Folly hath got, even amongst the most Foolish), yet that I am that She, that onely She, whose Deity recreates both gods and men, even this is a sufficient Argument, that I no sooner stept up to speak to this full Assembly, than all your faces put on a kind of new and unwonted pleasantness. So suddenly have you clear'd your brows, and with so frolique and hearty a laughter given me your applause, that in troth, as many of you as I behold on every side of me, seem to me no less than Homer's gods drunk with Nectar and Nepenthe; whereas before,

ye sat as lumpish and pensive as if ye had come [1] from consulting an Oracle. And as it usually happens when the Sun begins to shew his Beams, or when after a sharp Winter the Spring breathes afresh on the Earth, all things immediately get a new face, new colour, and recover as it were a certain kind of youth again : in like manner, by but beholding me, ye have in an instant gotten another kind of Countenance ; and so what the otherwise great Rhetoricians with their tedious and long-studied Orations can hardly effect, to wit, to remove the trouble of the Mind, I have done it at once, with my single look.

But if ye ask me why I appear before you in this strange dress, be pleas'd to lend me your ears, and I'le tell you ; not those ears, I mean, ye carry to Church, but abroad with ye, such as ye are wont to prick up to Jugglers, Fools and Buffons, and such as our Friend Midas once gave to Pan. For I am dispos'd awhile to play the Sophister with ye ; not of their sort who nowadays buzle Young-men's heads with certain empty notions and curious trifles, yet teach them

[1] e Trophonii specu.

nothing but a more than Womanish obstinacy of scolding: but I'le imitate those Antients, who, that they might the better avoid that infamous appellation of *Sophi* or *Wise*, chose rather to be call'd Sophisters. Their business was to celebrate the Praises of the gods and valiant men. And the like Encomium shall ye hear from me, but neither of Hercules nor Solon, but mine own dear Self, that is to say, Folly. Nor do I esteem those Wise-men a rush, that call it a foolish and insolent thing to praise one's self. Be it as foolish as they would make it, so they confess it proper: and what can be more, than that Folly be her own Trumpet? For who can set me out better than my self, unless perhaps I could be better known to another than to my self? Though yet I think it somewhat more modest than the general practice of our Nobles and Wise men, who, throwing away all shame, hire some flattering Orator or Lying Poet, from whose mouth they may hear their praises, that is to say meer lyes; and yet, composing themselves with a seeming modesty, spread out their Peacock's plumes and erect their Crests, whilst this impudent Flatterer

equals a man of nothing to the gods, and proposes him as an absolute pattern of all Virtue that's wholly a stranger to 't, sets out a pittiful Jay in other's Feathers, washes the Blackmoor white, and lastly [1] swells a Gnat to an Elephant. In short, I will follow that old Proverb that says, 'He may lawfully praise himself that lives far from Neighbours.' Though, by the way, I cannot but wonder at the ingratitude, shall I say, or negligence of Men, who, notwithstanding they honour me in the first place and are willing enough to confess my bounty, yet not one of them for these so many ages has there been, who in some thankful Oration has set out the praises of Folly; when yet there has not wanted them, whose elaborate endeavours have extol'd Tyrants, Agues, Flyes, Baldness and such other Pests of Nature, to their own loss of both time and sleep. And now ye shall hear from me a plain extemporary speech, but so much the truer. Nor would I have ye think it like the rest of Orators, made for the Ostentation of Wit; for these, as ye know, when they have been beating their heads some thirty years about an Oration, and

[1] ex musca elephantem.

at last perhaps produce somewhat that was never their own, shall yet swear they compos'd it in three dayes, and that too for diversion: whereas I ever lik't it best to speak [1] whatever came first out.

But let none of ye expect from me, that after the manner of Rhetoricians I should go about to Define what I am, much less use any Division; for I hold it equally unlucky to circumscribe her whose Deity is universal, or make the least Division in that Worship about which every thing is so generally agree'd. Or to what purpose, think ye, should I describe my self, when I am here present before ye, and ye behold me speaking? For I am, as ye see, that true and onely giver of wealth, whom the Greeks call Μωρία, the Latines *Stultitia*, and our plain English *Folly*. Or what need was there to have said so much, as if my very looks were not sufficient to inform ye who I am? Or as if any man, mistaking me for Wisedome, could not at first sight convince himself by my face, the true index of my mind? I am no Counterfeit, nor do I carry one thing in my looks and another in

[1] quicquid in buccam venerit.

my breast. No, I am in every respect so like my self, that neither can they dissemble me, who arrogate to themselves the appearance and title of Wisemen, and walk [1] like Asses in Scarlet-hoods; though after all their hypocrisie Midas's ears will discover their Master. A most ingrateful generation of men, that, when they are wholly given up to my Party, are yet publickly asham'd of the name, as taking it for a reproach; for which cause, since in truth they are Μωρότατοι, Fools, and yet would appear to the World to be Wisemen and Thales's, wee'll ev'n call 'em Μωροσόφους, Wise-fools.

Nor will it be amiss also to imitate the Rhetoricians of our times, who think themselves in a manner Gods, if like Horse-leeches they can but appear to be double-tongu'd; and believe they have done a mighty act if in their Latin Orations they can but shuffle-in some ends of Greek, like Mosaick-work, though altogether by head and shoulders and less to the purpose. And if they want hard words, they run over some Worm-eaten Manuscript, and pick out half a Dozen of the most old and absolete to con-

[1] in purpura simiae.

found their Reader, believing, no doubt, that they that understand their meaning will like it the better, and they that do not, will admire it the more by how much the lesse they understand it. Nor is this way of ours of admiring what seems most Forreign without it's particular grace; for if there happen to be any more ambitious than others, they may give their applause with a smile, and, like the Asse, [1] shake their ears, that they may be thought to understand more than the rest of their neighbours.

But to come to the purpose: I have giv'n ye my name; but what Epithet shall I adde? What but that of the most Foolish? For by what properer name can so great a goddess as Folly be known to her Disciples? And because it is not alike known to all from what stock I am sprung, with the Muses' good leave I'le do my endeavour to satisfie you. But yet neither the first Chaos, Orcus, Saturn, or Japhet, nor any of those thred-bare, musty Gods, were my Father, but Plutus, Riches; that only he, that is, in spight of Hesiod, Homer, nay and

[1] *τὰ ὦτα κινῶσι.*

Jupiter himself, *Divum Pater atque Hominum Rex*, the Father of Gods and Men; at whose single beck, as heretofore, so at present, all things Sacred and Prophane are turn'd topsie turvy. According to whose Pleasure War, Peace, Empire, Counsels, Judgements, Assemblies, Wedlocks, Bargains, Leagues, Laws, Arts, all things Light or Serious—I want breath—in short, all the publick and private business of mankind, is govern'd; without whose help all that Herd of Gods of the Poets' making, and those few of the better sort of the rest, either would not be at all, or if they were, they would be but [1] such as live at home and keep a poor house to themselves. And to whomsoever hee's an Enemy, 'tis not Pallas her self that can befriend him: as on the contrary he whom he favours may lead Jupiter and his Thunder in a string. This is my father [2] and in him I glory. Nor did he produce me from his brain, as Jupiter that sowre and ill-look'd Pallas; but [3] of that lovely Nymph call'd Youth, the most beautiful and galliard of all the rest. Nor was

[1] *οἰκόσιτοι.* [2] Hujus me glorior esse.
[3] ex Neotete Nympha.

I, like that limping Black-smith, begot in the sad and irksome bonds of Matrimony. Yet, mistake me not, 'twas not that blind and decrepit Plutus in Aristophanes that got me, but such as he was in his full strength and pride of youth; and not that onely, but at such a time when he had been well heated with Nectar, of which he had, at one of the Banquets of the Gods, taken a dose extraordinary.

And as to the place of my birth, forasmuch as nowadays that is look'd upon as a main point of Nobility, it was neither, like Apollo's, in the floating Delos, nor Venus-like on the rolling Sea, nor in any of blind Homer's as blind Caves: "but in the fortunate Islands, where [1] all things grew without plowing or sowing; where neither Labour, nor Old-age, nor Disease, was ever heard of; and in whose fields neither Daffadil, Mallows, Onyons, Beans, and such contemptible things would ever grow; but, on the contrary, Rue, Angelica, Buglosse, Marjoram, Trefoiles, Roses, Violets, Lillies, and all the Gardens of Adonis, invite both your sight and your smelling." And being thus born, I did not begin the world,

[1] —sponte sua per se dabat omnia tellus.

as other Children are wont, with crying; but streight perch'd up and smil'd on my mother. Nor do I envy to the great Jupiter the Goat, his Nurse, forasmuch as I was suckled by two jolly Nymphs, to wit, Drunkenness, the daughter of Bacchus, and Ignorance, of Pan. And as for such my companions and followers as ye perceive about me, if you have a mind to know who they are, ye are not like to be the wiser for me, unlesse it be in Greek: This here, which you observe with that proud cast of her eye, is Φιλαυτία, Self-love; She with the smiling countenance, that is ever and anon clapping her hands, is Κολακία, Flattery; She that looks as if she were half asleep, is Λήθη, Oblivion; She that sits leaning on both Elbows with her hands clutch'd together, is Μισοπονία, Laziness; She with the Garland on her head, and that smells so strong of perfumes, is Ἡδονὴ, Pleasure; She with those staring eyes, moving here and there, is Ἀνοία, Madness; She with the smooth Skin and full pamper'd body is Τρυφὴ, Wantonness; and, as to the two Gods that ye see with them, the one is Κῶμος, Intemperance, the other Νήγρετος ὕπνος, Dead Sleep. These, I say, are

my houshold Servants, and by their faithful Counsels I have subjected all things to my Dominion, and erected an empire over Emperors themselves. Thus have ye had my Lineage, Education, and Companions.

And now, lest I may seem to have taken upon me the name of Goddess without cause, you shall in the next place understand how far my Deity extends, and what advantage by 't I have brought both to Gods and Men. For, if it was not unwisely said by some body, that this only is to be a God, To help Men; and if they are deservedly enroll'd among the Gods that first brought in Corn and Wine and such other things as are for the common good of mankind, why am not I of right the ἄλφα, or first, of all the gods? who being but one, yet bestow all things on all men. For first, What is more sweet or more precious than Life? And yet from whom can it more properly be said to come than from me? For neither [1] the Crab-favour'd Pallas's spear, nor [2] the Cloud-gathering Jupiter's Shield, either beget, or propagate mankind; But even he himself, the

[1] *ὀβριμοπάτρης* Palladis hasta. [2] *νεφεληγερέτου* Jovis ægis.

Father of Gods, and King of Men [1] at whose very beck the Heavens shake, must lay-by his forked thunder, and those looks wherewith he conquer'd the Gyants, and with which at pleasure he frights the rest of the Gods, and like a Common Stage-player put on a Disguise, as often as he goes about that, which now and then he do's, that is to say [2] the getting of children: And the Stoicks too, that conceive themselves next to the Gods, yet shew me one of them, nay the veryest Bygot of the Sect, and if he do not put off his beard, the badge of Wisdom, though yet it be no more than what is common with him and Goats; yet at least he must lay-by his supercilious Gravity, smooth his forehead, shake off his rigid Principles, and for some time commit an act of folly and dotage. In fine, that Wiseman who ever he be, if he intends to have Children must have recourse to me. But tell me, I beseech ye, What Man is that would submit his neck to the Noose of Wedlock, if as Wisemen should, he did but first truly weigh the inconvenience of the thing? Or what Woman is there would ever go to 't did she seriously

[1] qui nutu tremefactat Olympum. [2] *παιδοποιεῖν*.

consider either the peril of Child-bearing, or the trouble of bringing them up? So then, if ye owe your beings to Wedlock, ye owe that Wedlock to this my follower, Madness; and what ye owe to me I have already told ye. Again, she that has but once try'd what it is, would she, do ye think, make a second venture, if it were not for my other Companion, Oblivion? Nay, even Venus her self, notwithstanding what ever Lucretius has said, would not deny but that all her vertue were lame and fruitless without the help of my Deity. For out of that little, odd, ridiculous May-game came the supercilious Philosophers, in whose room have succeeded a kind of people the world calls Monks, Cardinals, Priests, and the most holy Popes. And Lastly, all that Rabble of the Poets'-Gods, with which Heaven is so thwack't and throng'd, that though it be of so vast an extent, they are hardly able to croud one by another.

But I think it a small matter that ye thus owe your beginning of life to me, unless I also shew you that whatever benefit you receive in the progress of it is of my gift likewise. For what other is this? Can that be call'd life where ye

take away pleasure? Oh! Do ye like what I say? I knew none of you could have so little Wit, or so much folly, or Wisdom rather, as to be of any other opinion. For even the Stoicks themselves, that so severely cry'd down pleasure, did but handsomly dissemble, and rail'd against it to the common People, to no other end but that having discourag'd them from it, they might the more plentifully enjoy it themselves. But tell me, by Jupiter, what part of man's life is that that is not sad, crabbed, unpleasant, insipid, troublesome, unless it be seasoned with Pleasure, that is to say, Folly? For the proof of which the never-sufficiently prais'd Sophocles, in that his happy Elogy of us [1] 'To know nothing is the onely happiness', might be Authority enough, but that I intend to take every particular by it's self.

And first, Who knows not but a man's Infancy is the merriest part of life to himself, and most acceptable to others? For what is that in them which we kiss, embrace, cherish, nay Enemies succour, but this witchcraft of Folly, which wise Nature did of purpose give them into the

[1] Ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν ἥδιστος βίος.

world with them, that they might the more pleasantly passe-over the toil of Education, and as it were flatter the care and diligence of their Nurses. And then for Youth, which is in such reputation everywhere, how do all men favour it, study to advance it and lend it their helping hand? And whence, I pray, all this Grace? Whence but from me? by whose kindness, as it understands as little as may be, it is also for that reason the higher priviledged from exceptions; and I am mistaken if, when it is grown up and by experience and discipline brought to savour something like Man, if in the same instant that beauty does not fade, it's liveliness decay, it's pleasantness grow flat, and it's briskness fail. And by how much the further it runs from me, by so much the less it lives, till it comes to [1] the burthen of Old age, not onely hateful to others, but to it self also. Which also were altogether insupportable did not I pitty it's condition, in being present with it, and, as the Poets'-gods were wont to assist such as were dying with some pleasant Metamorphœsis, help their decrepitness as much as

[1] molesta senectus.

in me lies by bringing them back to a second childhood, from whence they are not improperly called [1] Twice-Children. Which, if ye ask me how I do it, I shall not be shy in the point. I bring them to our River Lethe (for it's spring-head rises in the Fortunate Islands, and that other of Hell is but a Brook in comparison), from which, as soon as they have drunk down a long forgetfulness, they wash away by degrees the perplexity of their minds, and so wax young again.

But perhaps you'll say, They are foolish and doting. Admit it; 'tis the very essence of Child-hood; as if to be such were not to be a fool, or that that condition had any thing pleasant in it, but that it understood nothing. For who would not look upon that Child as a Prodigy that should have as much Wisdome as a Man?—according to that common Proverb, [2] 'I do not like a Child that is a Man too soon.' Or who would endure a Converse or Friendship with that Old-man, who to so large an experience of things, had joyn'd an equal strength of mind and sharpness of judgement? And therefore

[1] Παλίμπαιδας.

[2] Odi puerulum praecoci sapientia.

for this reason it is that Old-age dotes ; and that it does so, it is beholding to me. Yet, not withstanding, is this dotard exempt from all those cares that distract a Wise man ; he is not the less pot-Companion, nor is he sensible of that burden of life, which the more manly Age finds enough to do to stand upright under 't. And sometimes too, like Plautus's Old-man, he returns to his three Letters, A.M.O., the most unhappy of all things living, if he rightly understood what he did in 't. And yet, so much do I befriend him, that I make him well receiv'd of his friends, and no unpleasant Companion ; for as much as, according to Homer, [1] Nestor's discourse was pleasanter than Honey, whereas Achilles's was both bitter and malicious ; and that of Old-men, as he has it in another place, florid. In which respect, also, they have this advantage of children, in that they want the onely pleasure of t' others life, we'll suppose it pratling. Adde to this that old men are more eagerly delighted with children, and they, again, with Old-men. [2] 'Like to like', quoth the Divel

[1] Melle dulcior fluit oratio.

[2] ὅμοιον ἄγει θεὸς ὡς τὸν ὅμοιον.

to the Collier. For what difference between them, but that the one has more wrinckles and years upon his head than the other? Otherwise, the brightness of their hair, toothless mouth, weakness of body, love of Milk, broken speech, chatting, toying, forgetfulness, inadvertency, and briefly, all other their actions, agree in every thing. And by how much the nearer they approach to this Old-age, by so much they grow backward into the likeness of Children, until like them they pass from life to death, without any weariness of the one, or sense of t' other.

And now, let him that will compare the benefits they receive by me, with the Metamorphoses of the Gods; of whom, I shall not mention what they have done in their pettish humours, but where they have been most favourable: turning one into a Tree, another into a Bird, a third into a Grashopper, Serpent, or the like. As if there were any difference between perishing, and being another thing! But I restore the same man to the best and happiest part of his life. And if Men would but refrain from all commerce with Wisdom, and

give up themselves to be govern'd by me, they should never know what it were to be old, but solace themselves with a perpetual youth. Do but observe our grim Philosophers that are perpetually beating their brains on knotty Subjects, and for the most part you'll find 'em grown old before they are scarce young. And whence is it, but that their continual and restless thoughts insensibly prey upon their spirits, and dry up their Radical Moisture? Whereas, on the contrary, my fat fools are as plump and round as a Westphalian Hogg, and never sensible of old age, unless perhaps, as sometimes it rarely happens, they come to be infected with Wisdom; so hard a thing it is for a man to be happy in all things. And to this purpose is that no small testimony of the Proverb, that sayes, 'Folly is the onely thing that keeps Youth at a stay, and Old age afar off;' as it is verifi'd in the Brabanders, of whom there goes this common saying, 'That Age, which is wont to render other Men wiser, makes them the greater Fools.' And yet there is scarce any Nation of a more jocund converse, or that is less sensible of the misery of Old age, than they are. And to these, as in

scituation, so for manner of living, come nearest my friends the Hollanders. And why should I not call them mine, since they are so diligent observers of me that they are commonly call'd by my name?—of which they are so far from being asham'd, they rather pride themselves in 't. Let the foolish world then be packing and seek out Medeas, Circes, Venuses, Auroras and I know not what other Fountains of restoring Youth. I am sure I am the onely person that both can, and have made it good. 'Tis I alone that have that wonderful Juice with which Memnon's daughter prolong'd the youth of her Grandfather Tithon. I am that Venus by whose favour Phaon became so young again that Sappho fell in love with him. Mine are those Herbs, if yet there be any such, mine those Charms, and mine that Fountain, that not onely restores departed Youth but, which is more desirable, preserves it perpetual. And if ye all subscribe to this Opinion, that nothing is better than Youth, or more execrable than Age, I conceive you cannot but see how much ye are indebted to me, that have retain'd so great a good, and shut out so great an evil.

But why do I altogether spend my breath in speaking of Mortals? View Heaven round, and let him that will, reproach me with my name, if he find any one of the Gods that were not stinking and contemptible, were he not made acceptable by my Deity. Whence is it that Bacchus is always a Stripling, and bushy-hair'd? but because he is mad, and drunk, and spends his life in Drinking, Dancing, Revels, and May-games, not having so much as the least society with Pallas. And lastly, he is so far from desiring to be accounted wise, that he delights to be worshipp'd with Sports and Gambals; nor is he displeas'd with the Proverb that gave him the sirname of Fool, [1] 'A greater Fool than Bacchus'; which name of his was chang'd to Morychus, for that sitting before the gates of his Temple, the wanton Countrey people were wont to bedaub him with new Wine and Figgs. And of scoffs, what not, hath not the antient Comedies thrown on him? O foolish God, say they, and worthy to be born as thou wert of thy Father's thigh! And yet, who had not rather be thy Fool and Sot, alwayes merry, ever

[1] Morycho stultior.

young, and making sport for other people, than either Homer's Jupiter, with his crooked Councels, terrible to every one; or old Pan with his Hubbubs; or smutty Vulcan half-cover'd with Cinders; or even Pallas her self, so dreadful with her Gorgon's Head and Spear and a Countenance like Bul-beef? Why is Cupid always Pourtrai'd like a Boy, but because he is a very Wagg, and can neither do nor so much as think of any thing sober? Why Venus ever in her prime, but because of her affinity with me? Witness that colour of her Hair, so resembling my Father, from whence she is call'd [1] the golden Venus; and lastly, ever laughing, if ye give any credit to the Poets, or their followers the Statuaries. What Deity did the Romans ever more religiously adore than that of Flora, the foundress of all pleasure? Nay, if ye should but diligently search the lives of the most sowre and morose of the Gods out of Homer and the rest of the Poets, you would find 'em all but so many pieces of Folly. And to what purpose should I run over any of the other gods' tricks when ye know enough of Jupiter's loose Loves?

[1] Venus aurea.

when that chast Diana shall so far forget her Sexe as to be ever hunting and ready to perish for Endymion? But I had rather they should hear these things from Momus, from whom heretofore they were wont to have their shares, till in one of their angry humours they tumbled him, together with Ate, Goddess of Mischief, down headlong to the Earth, because his wisdom, forsooth, unseasonably disturb'd their happiness. Nor since that dares any mortal give him harbour, though I must confess there wanted little but that he had been receiv'd into the Courts of Princes, had not my companion Flattery reign'd in chief there, with whom and t' other there is no more correspondence than between Lambs and Wolves. From whence it is that the Gods play the fool with the greater liberty and more content to themselves, [1] 'doing all things carelessly,' as says Father Homer, that is to say, without any one to correct them. For what ridiculous stuff is there which that stump of the Fig-tree Priapus does not afford 'em? what Tricks and Legerdemains with which Mercury does not cloak his thefts? what buffonry that Vulcan

[1] ῥᾳ̣ον ἄγοντες.

is not guilty of, while one while with his polt-foot, another with his smutcht muzzle, another with his impertinencies, he makes sport for the rest of the Gods? As also that old Silenus with his Countrey-dances, Polyphemus footing time to his Cyclops hammers, the Nymphs with their Jiggs, and Satyrs with their Anticks; whilst Pan makes 'em all twitter with some coarse Ballad, which yet they had rather hear than the Muses themselves, and chiefly when they are well whitled with Nectar. Besides, what should I mention what these Gods do when they are half drunk? Now by my troth, so foolish that I my self can hardly refrain laughter. But in these matters 'twere better we remember'd Harpocrates, lest some Eves-dropping God or other take us whispering that which Momus onely has the priviledge of speaking at length.

And therefore, according to Homer's example, I think it high time to leave the Gods to themselves, and look down a little on the Earth; wherein likewise you'll find nothing frolick or fortunate, that it ows not to me. So provident has that great Parent of Mankind, Nature, been, that there should not be any thing without it's

mixture, and as it were seasoning of Folly. For since according to the definition of the Stoicks, Wisdom is nothing else than to be govern'd by reason; and on the contrary Folly, to be giv'n up to the will of our Passions; that the life of man might not be altogether disconsolate and hard to away with, of how much more Passion than Reason has Jupiter compos'd us? putting in, as one would say, [1] 'scarce half an ounce to a pound'. Besides, he has confin'd Reason to a narrow corner of the brain, and left all the rest of the body to our Passions; as also set up, against this one, two as it were, masterless Tyrants—Anger, that possesseth the region of the heart, and consequently the very Fountain of life, the Heart it self; and Lust, that stretcheth its Empire every where. Against which double force how powerful Reason is, let common experience declare, inasmuch as she, which yet is all she can do, may call out to us till she be hoarse again, and tell us the Rules of Honesty and Vertue; while they give up the Reins to their Governour, and make a hideous clamour, till at last being wearied, he suffer himself

[1] Semiunciam ad assem.

to be carried whither they please to hurry him.

But forasmuch as such as are born to the business of the world have some little sprinklings of Reason more than the rest, yet that they may the better manage it, even in this as well as in other things, they call me to counsel; and I give 'em such as is worthy of my self, to wit That they take to 'em a wife—a silly thing, God wot, and foolish, yet wanton and pleasant, by which means the roughness of the Masculine temper is season'd and sweeten'd by her folly. For in that Plato seems to doubt under which Genus he should put woman, to wit that of rational Creatures or Brutes, he intended no other in it than to shew the apparent folly of the Sexe. For if perhaps any of them goes about to be thought wiser than the rest, what else does she do but play the fool twice, as if a man should [1]'teach a Cow to dance', [2]'a thing quite against the hair'. For as it doubles the crime if any one should put a disguise upon Nature, or endeavour to bring her to that she will in no wise bear, according to that Proverb of the

[1] Bovem ad ceroma. [2] invita reluctanteque Minerva.

Greeks, [1] 'An Ape is an Ape, though clad in Scarlet'; so a woman is a woman still, that is to say foolish, let her put on what ever Vizard she please.

But, by the way, I hope that Sexe is not so foolish as to take offence at this, that I my self, being a woman, and Folly too, have attributed Folly to them. For if they weigh it right, they needs must acknowledg that they owe it to Folly that they are more fortunate than men. As first their Beauty, which, and that not without cause, they prefer before every thing, since by its means they exercise a Tyranny even upon Tyrants themselves; otherwise, whence proceeds that sowre look, rough skin, bushy beard and such other things as speak plain Old age in a man, but from that Disease of Wisdom? whereas women's Cheeks are ever plump and smooth, their Voice small, their Skin soft, as if they imitated a certain kind of perpetual Youth. Again, what greater thing do they wish in their whole lives, than that they may please the Men? For to what other purpose are all those Dresses, Washes, Baths, Curlings, Slops, Perfumes, and

[1] Simia est simia, etiamsi purpura vestiatur.

those several little tricks of setting their Faces, painting their Eye-brows, and smoothing their Skins? And now tell me, what higher Letters of Recommendation have they to men than this Folly? For what is it they do not permit 'em to do? and to what other purpose than that of pleasure? wherein yet their folly is not the least thing that pleaseth; which how true it is, I think no one will deny, that does but consider with himself, what foolish Discourse and odd Gambals pass between a man and his woman, as oft as he has a mind to be gamesome? And so I have shown ye whence the first and chiefest delight of man's life springs.

But there are some, you'll say, and those too none of the youngest, that have a greater kindness for the Pot than the Petticoat, and place their chiefest pleasure in good fellowship. If there can be any great entertainment without a woman at it, let others look to 't. This I am sure, there was never any pleasant which Folly gave not the relish to. Insomuch that if they find no occasion of Laughter, they send for [1] 'one that may make it', or hire some Buffon flatterer,

[1] γελωτοποιὸν quempiam.

whose ridiculous discourse may put by the Gravity of the company. For to what purpose were it to clogg our Stomacks with Dainties, Junkets and the like Stuff, unless our Eyes and Ears, nay whole Mind, were likewise entertain'd with Jests, Merriments and Laughter? But of these kind of second Courses I am the onely Cook; though yet those ordinary practises of our Feasts, as choosing a King, throwing Dice, drinking Healths, trouling it Round, dancing the Cushion and the like, were not invented by the seven Wise Men but my Self, and that too for the common pleasure of Mankind. The nature of all which things is such, that the more of Folly they have, the more they conduce to Humane Life, which, if it were unpleasant, did not deserve the name of Life; and other than such it could not well be, did not these kind of Diversions wype away tediousnesse, nexte cosyn to the other.

But perhaps there are some that neglect this way of pleasure, and rest satisfi'd in the enjoyment of their Friends, calling friendship the most desirable of all things; more necessary than either air, fire, or water; so delectable,

that he that shall take it out of the World had as good put out the Sun; and lastly so commendable, if yet that make any thing to the matter, that neither the Philosophers themselves doubted to reckon it among their chiefest good. But what if I shew you that I am both [1] the beginning and end of this so great good also? Nor shall I go about to prove it by Fallacies, Sorites, Dilemmas, or other the like subtilties of Logicians, [2] but after my blunt way, point out the thing as clearly as 'twere with my finger.

And now tell me, if to wink, slip over, be blind at, or deceiv'd in, the vices of our friends, nay, to admire and esteem them for Virtues, be not at least the next degree to folly? What is it when one kisses his Mistresses freckle Neck, another the Wart on her Nose? When a Father shall swear his squint-ey'd Child is more lovely than Venus? What is this, I say, but meer folly? And so, perhaps you'l cry, it is; and yet 'tis this onely that joyns friends together, and continues them so joyn'd. I speak of ordinary men, of whom none are born without their im-

[1] prora et puppis.
[2] pingui, quod aiunt, Minerva.

perfections, and happy is he that is prest with the least : for among wise Princes there is either no friendship at all, or if there be, 'tis unpleasant and reserv'd, and that too but amongst a very few, 'twere a crime to say none. For that the greatest part of mankind are fools, nay there is not any one that dotes not in many things ; and friendship, you know, is seldome made but amongst equalls. And yet if it should so happen that there were a mutual good-will between them, it is in no wise firm nor very long liv'd ; that is to say, among such as are morose and more circumspect than needs, as being Eagle-sighted into his friends' faults, but so blear-ey'd to their own that they take not the least notice of the Wallet that hangs behind their own Shoulders. Since then the nature of Man is such that there is scarce any one to be found that is not subject to many errors, add to this the great diversity of minds and studies, so many slips, oversights and chances of humane life, and how is it possible there should be any true friendship between those Argus's, so much as one hour, were it not for that which the Greeks excellently call εὐήθειαν ? and you may render by Folly or good Nature,

chuse you whether. But what? Is not the Author and Parent of all our Love, Cupid, as blind as a beetle? and as with him [1]all colours agree, so from him is it that every one likes his own Sweeter-kin best, though never so ugly, and [2]'that an old man dotes on his old wife, and a boy on his girle'. These things are not onely done every where but laught at too, yet as ridiculous as they are, they make society pleasant, and, as it were, glew it together.

And what has been said of Friendship may more reasonably be presum'd of Matrimony, which in truth is no other than an inseparable conjunction of life. Good God! What Divorces, or what not worse than that, would daily happen, were not the converse between a man and his wife supported and cherished by flattery, apishnesse, gentlenesse, ignorance, dissembling, certain Retainers of mine also! Whoop holiday! how few marriages should we have, if the Husband should but through-examin how many tricks his pretty little Mop of Modesty has plaid' before she was marry'd! And how

[1] *τὰ μὴ καλὰ καλὰ πέφανται.*

[2] ut cascus cascam et pupus pupam deamet.

fewer of them would hold together, did not most of the Wife's actions escape the Husband's knowledg through his neglect or sottishness! And for this also ye are beholding to me, by whose means it is that the Husband is pleasant to his Wife, the Wife to her Husband, and the house kept in quiet. A man is laught at, when seeing his Wife weeping he licks up her tears. But how much happier is it to be thus deceiv'd than by being troubled with jealousie, not onely to torment himself, but set all things in a hubbub!

In fine, I am so necessary to the making of all society and manner of life both delightful and lasting, that neither would the people long endure their Governors, nor the Servant his Master, nor the Master his Footman, nor the Scholar his Tutor, nor one friend another, nor the Wife her Husband, nor the Userer the Borrower, nor a Souldier his Commander, nor one Companion another, unlesse all of them had their interchangeable failings, one while flattering, other while prudently conniving, and generally sweetning one another with some small relish of Folly.

And now you 'd think I had said all, but ye

shall hear yet greater things. Will he, I pray, love any one that hates himself? Or ever agree with another who is not at peace with himself? Or beget pleasure in another that is troublesome to himself? I think no one will say it that is not more foolish than Folly. And yet, if ye should exclude me, there 's no man but would be so far from enduring another that he would stink in his own nostrils, be nauseated with his own actions, and himself become odious to himself; forasmuch as Nature, in too many things rather a Stepdame than a Parent to us, has imprinted that evil in men, especially such as have least judgment, that every one repents him of his own condition and admires that of others. Whence it comes to pass that all her gifts, elegancy and graces corrupt and perish. For what benefit is Beauty, the greatest blessing of Heaven, if it be mixt with affectation? What Youth, if corrupted with the severity of old Age? Lastly, what is that in the whole business of a man's life he can do with any grace to himself or others—for it is not so much a thing of Art, as the very life of every Action, that it be done with a good meen—unlesse this my friend and

companion, Self-love, be present with it? Nor does she without cause supply me the place of a Sister, since her whole endeavours are to act my part every where. For what is more foolish than for a man to study nothing else than how to please himself? To make himself the object of his own admiration? And yet, what is there that is either delightful or taking, nay rather what not the contrary, that a man does against the hair? Take away this Salt of life, and the Orator may ev'n sit still with his Action, the Musitian with all his division will be able to please no man, the Player be hist off the Stage, the Poet and all his Muses ridiculous, the Painter with his Art contemptible, and the Physitian with all his Slip-slops go a begging. Lastly, thou wilt be taken [1] for an Ugly fellow instead of a Beautiful, for Old and Decrepit instead of Youthful, and a Beast instead of a Wise man, a Child instead of Eloquent, and instead of a well-bred man, a clown. So necessary a thing it is that every one flatter himself, and commend himself to himself before he can be commended by others.

[1] pro Nireo Thersites, pro Phaone Nestor, pro Minerva sus.

Lastly, since it is the chiefest point of happinesse [1] 'that a man is willing to be what he is', you have further abridg'd in this my Self-love, that no man's asham'd of his own face, no man of his own wit, no man of his own parentage, no man of his own house, no man of his manner of living, nor any man of his own Country; so that a Highlander has no desire to change with an Italian, a Thracian with an Athenian, nor a Scythian for the fortunate Islands. O the singular care of Nature, that in so great a variety of things has made all equal! Where she has been sometime sparing of her gifts she has recompenc'd it with the more of self-Love; though here, I must confess, I speak foolishly, it being the greatest of all other her Gifts: to say nothing that no great action was ever attempted without my Motion, or Art brought to perfection without my help.

Is not War the very Root and Matter of all Fam'd Enterprises? And yet what more foolish than to undertake it for I know not what trifles, especially when both Parties are sure to lose more than they get by the bargain? For of

[1] Quod sis, esse velis.

those that are slain, [1] not a word of them; and for the rest, when both sides are close engag'd [2] 'and the Trumpets make an ugly noise', what use of those Wise men, I pray, that are so exhaust with study that their thin cold Blood has scarce any spirits left? No, it must be those blunt fat fellows, that by how much the more they exceed in Courage, fall short in Understanding. Unless perhaps one had rather chuse Demosthenes for a Souldier, who, following the example of Archilochius, threw away his Arms and betook him to his Heels e're he had scarce seen his Enemy; as ill a Souldier, as happy an Orator.

But Counsel, you'll say, is not of least concern in matters of War. In a General I grant it; but this thing of Warring is no part of Philosophy, but manag'd by Parasites, Pandars, Thieves, Cut-throats, Plow-men, Sots, Spend-thrifts and such other Dregs of Mankind, not Philosophers; who how unapt they are even for common converse, let Socrates, whom the Oracle of Apollo, though not so wisely, judg'd 'the wisest of all men living', be witness;

[1] οὐδεὶς λόγος. [2] et rauco crepuerunt cornua cantu.

who stepping up to speak somewhat, I know not what, in publique, was forc'd to come down again well laught at for his pains. Though yet in this he was not altogether a fool, that he refus'd the appellation of Wise, and returning it back to the Oracle, deliver'd his opinion That a wise man should abstain from medling with publique business; unless perhaps he should have rather admonisht us to beware of Wisdom if we intended to be reckon'd among the number of men, there being nothing but his Wisdom that first accus'd and afterwards sentenc't him to the drinking of his poison'd Cup. For while, as ye find him in Aristophanes, Philosophying about Clouds and Ideas, measuring how far a Flea could leap, and admiring that so small a creature as a Flye should make so great a buzze, he medled not with any thing that concern'd common life. But his Master being in danger of his head, his Scholar Plato is at hand, to wit that famous Patron, that being disturb'd with the noise of the people, could not go through half his first Sentence. What should I speak of Theophrastus, who being about to make an Oration, became as dumb as if he had met a Wolfe in

his way, which yet would have put courage in a Man of War? Or Isocrates, that was so cow-hearted that he durst never attempt it? Or Tully, that great Founder of the Roman Eloquence, that could never begin to speak without an odd kind of trembling, like a Boy that had got the Hick-cop; which Fabius interprets as an argument of a wise Oratour and one that was sensible of what he was doing; and while he sayes it, does he not plainly confess that Wisdom is a great obstacle to the true management of business? What would become of 'em, think ye, were they to fight it out at blows, that are so dead through fear, when the Contest is only with empty words?

And next to these is cry'd up, forsooth, that goodly sentence of Plato's: 'Happy is that Commonwealth where a Philosopher is Prince, or whose Prince is addicted to Philosophy'. When yet if ye consult Historians, you'll find no Princes more pestilent to the Commonwealth than where the Empire has fall'n to some smatterer in Philosophy or one given to Letters. To the truth of which I think the Catoes give sufficient credit; of whom the one was ever

disturbing the peace of the Commonwealth with his hair-brain'd accusations; the other, while he too wisely vindicated its liberty, quite overthrew it. Add to this the Bruti, Cassii, nay Cicero himself, that was no less pernicious to the Commonwealth of Rome than was Demosthenes to that of Athens. Besides M. Antoninus (that I may give ye one instance that there was once one good Emperour; for with much ado I can make it out) was become burthensome and hated of his Subjects, upon no other score but that he was so great a Philosopher. But admitting him good, he did the Commonwealth more hurt in leaving behind him such a Son as he did, than ever he did it good by his own Government. For these kind of Men that are so given up to the study of Wisdome are generally most unfortunate, but chiefly in their Children; Nature, it seems, so providently ordering it, lest this mischief of Wisdome should spread farther among mankind. For which reason 'tis manifest why Cicero's Son was so degenerate, and that wise Socrates's Children, as one has well observ'd, were more like their Mother than their Father, that is to say, Fools.

However this were to be born with, if only as to publick Employments they were [1] 'Like a Sow upon a pair of organs', were they any thing apter to discharge even the common Offices of Life. Invite a Wise man to a Feast and he'll spoil the company, either with Morose silence or troublesome Disputes. Take him out to Dance, and you'l swear [2] 'a Cow would have don't better'. Bring him to the Theatre, and his very looks are enough to spoil all, till like Cato he take an occasion of withdrawing rather than put off his supercilious gravity. Let him fall into discourse, and [3] he shall make more sudden stops than if he had a Woolf before him. Let him buy, or sell, or in short go about any of those things without which there is no living in this world, and you 'l say this piece of Wisdom were rather a Stock than a Man, of so little use is he to himself, Country, or Friends; and all because he is wholly ignorant of common things, and lives a course of life quite different from the people; by which means 'tis impossible but that he

[1] Asini ad lyram. [2] Camelus saltans.
[3] Lupus in fabula.

contract a popular odium, to wit, by reason of the great diversity of their life and souls. For what is there at all done among men that is not full of Folly, and that too from fools and to fools? Against which universal practice if any single one shall dare to set up his throat, my advice to him is, that following the example of Timon, he retire into some desart and there enjoy his wisdome to himself.

But, to return to my design, what power was it that drew those stony, oken and wild people into Cities, but flattery? For nothing else is signify'd by Amphion and Orpheus's Harp. What was it that, when the common people of Rome were like to have destroy'd all by their Mutiny, reduc'd them to Obedience? Was it a Philosophical Oration? Least. But a ridiculous and childish Fable, of the Belly and the rest of the Members. And as good success had Themistocles in his of the Fox and Hedghog. What wise man's Oration could ever have done so much with the people as Sertorius's invention of his white Hind? Or his ridiculous Emblem of pulling off a Horse's Tail hair by hair? Or as Lycurgus's his example of his two Whelps?

To say nothing of Minos and Numa, both which rul'd their foolish multitudes with Fabulous Inventions; with which kind of Toyes that great and powerful beast, the People, are led any way. Again what City ever receiv'd Plato's or Aristotle's Laws, or Socrates's Precepts? But, on the contrary, what made the Decii devote themselves to the Infernal Gods, or Q. Curtius to leap into the Gulph, but an empty vain glory, a most bewitching Sirene? And yet 'tis strange it should be so condemn'd by those wise Philosophers. For what is more foolish, say they, than for a Suppliant Suiter to flatter the people, to buy their favour with gifts, to court the applauses of so many fools, to please himself with their Acclamations, to be carri'd on the people's shoulders as in triumph, and have a brazen Statue in the Market place? Add to this the adoption of Names and Sirnames; those Divine Honours given to a man of no Reputation, and the Deification of the most wicked Tyrants with publicque Ceremonies; most foolish things, and such as one Democritus is too little to laugh at. Who denies it? And yet from this root sprang all the great Acts of

the Heroes, which the Pens of so many Eloquent men have extoll'd to the Skies. In a word, this Folly is that that lai'd the foundation of Cities; and by it, Empire, Authority, Religion, Policy and publique Actions are preserv'd; neither is there any thing in Humane Life that is not a kind of pastime of Folly.

But to speak of Arts, what set men's wits on work to invent and transmit to Posterity so many Famous, as they conceive, pieces of Learning, but the thirst of Glory? With so much loss of sleep, such pains and travel, have the most foolish of men thought to purchase themselves a kind of I know not what Fame, than which nothing can be more vain. And yet notwithstanding, ye owe this advantage to Folly, and which is the most delectable of all other, that ye reap the benefit of other men's madness.

And now, having vindicated to my self the praise of Fortitude and Industry, what think ye if I do the same by that of Prudence? But some will say, You may as well joyn Fire and Water. It may be so. But yet I doubt not but to succeed even in this also, if, as ye have done hitherto, ye will but favour me with your attention.

And first, if Prudence depends upon Experience, to whom is the honour of that name more proper? To the Wiseman, who partly out of modesty and partly distrust of himself, attempts nothing; or the Fool, whom neither Modesty which he never had, nor Danger which he never considers, can discourage from any thing? The Wiseman has recourse to the Books of the Antients, and from thence picks nothing but subtilties of words. The Fool, in undertaking and venturing on the business of the world, gathers, if I mistake not, the true Prudence, such as Homer though blind may be said to have seen, when he said [1] 'The burnt child dreads the fire'. For there are two main obstacles to the knowledge of things, Modesty that casts a mist before the understanding, and Fear that, having fanci'd a danger, disswades us from the attempt. But from these Folly sufficiently frees us, and few there are that rightly understand of what great advantage it is to blush at nothing and attempt every thing.

But if ye had rather take Prudence for that that consists in the judgment of things, hear

[1] *ρεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω.*

me, I beseech ye, how far they are from it that yet crack of the name. For first 'tis evident that all Humane things, like Alcibiades's Sileni or rural Gods, carry a double face, but not the least alike; so that what at first sight seems to be death, if you view it narrowly may prove to be life; and so the contrary. What appears beautiful may chance to be deform'd; what wealthy, a very begger; what infamous, praiseworthy; what learned, a dunce; what lusty, feeble; what jocund, sad; what noble, base; what lucky, unfortunate; what friendly, an enemy; and what healthful, noisome. In short, view the inside of these Sileni, and you'll find them quite other than what they appear; which, if perhaps it shall not seem so Philosophically spoken, I'll make it plain to you [1] 'after my blunt way'. Who would not conceive a Prince a great Lord and abundant in every thing? But yet being so ill furnisht with the gifts of the mind, and ever thinking he shall never have enough, he's the poorest of all men. And then for his mind so giv'n up to Vice, 'tis a shame how it inslaves him. I might in like

[1] pinguiore Minerva.

manner Philosophy of the rest; but let this one, for example's sake, be enough.

Yet why this? will some one say. Have patience, and I'll shew ye what I drive at. If any one seeing a Player acting his Part on a Stage, should go about to strip him of his disguise, and shew him to the people in his true Native Form, would he not, think ye, not onely spoil the whole design of the Play, but deserve himself to be pelted off with stones as a Phantastical Fool, and one out of his wits? But nothing is more common with them than such changes; the same person one while personating a Woman, and another while a Man; now a Youngster, and by and by a grim Seigniour; now a King, and presently a Peasant; now a God, and in a trice agen an ordinary Fellow. But to discover this were to spoil all, it being the onely thing that entertains the Eyes of the Spectators. And what is all this Life but a kind of Comedy, wherein men walk up and down in one another's Disguises, and Act their respective Parts, till the property-man brings 'em back to the Tyring House. And yet he often orders a different Dress, and makes him that came

but just now off in the Robes of a King, put on the Raggs of a Begger. Thus are all things represented by Counterfeit, and yet without this there were no living.

And here if any wise man, as it were dropt from Heaven, should start up and cry, This great thing, whom the World looks upon for a God and I know not what, is not so much as a Man, for that like a Beast he is led by his Passions, but the worst of Slaves, inasmuch as he gives himself up willingly to so many and such detestable Masters. Again if he should bid a man that were bewailing the death of his Father to laugh, for that he now began to live by having got an Estate, without which Life is but a kind of Death ; or call another that were boasting of his Family, ill begotten or base, because he is so far remov'd from Vertue that is the only Fountain of Nobility ; and so of the rest : what else would he get by 't but be thought himself Mad and Frantick ? For as nothing is more foolish than preposterous Wisdome, so nothing is more unadvised than a froward unseasonable Prudence. And such is his that does not comply with the present

time [1] 'and order himself as the Market goes', but forgetting that Law of Feasts, [2] 'either drink or begon,' undertakes to disprove a common receiv'd Opinion. Whereas on the contrary 'tis the part of a truly Prudent man not to be wise beyond his Condition, but either to take no notice of what the world does, or run with it for company. But this is foolish, you'll say; nor shall I deny it, provided always ye be so civil on t' other side as to confess that this is to Act a Part in that World.

But, O ye Gods, [3] 'shall I speak or hold my tongue?' But why should I be silent in a thing that is more true than truth it self? However it might not be amiss perhaps in so great an Affair, to call forth the Muses from Helicon, since the Poets so often invoke 'em upon every foolish occasion. Be present then awhile, and assist me, ye Daughters of Jupiter, while I make it out that there is no way to that so much Fam'd Wisdome, nor access to that Fortress as they call it of Happiness, but under the Banner of

[1] et foro noluit uti. [2] ἢ πῖθι ἢ ἄπιθι.
[3] Eloquar an sileam?

Folly. And first 'tis agreed of all hands that our passions belong to Folly; inasmuch as we judge a wise Man from a Fool by this, that the one is order'd by them, the other by Reason; and therefore the Stoicks remove from a wise man all disturbances of Mind as so many Diseases. But these Passions do not onely the Office of a Tutor to such as are making towards the Port of Wisdome, but are in every exercise of Vertue as it were Spurs and Incentives, nay and Encouragers to well doing: which though that great Stoick Seneca most strongly denys, and takes from a wise man all affections whatever, yet in doing that he leaves him not so much as a Man, but rather a new kind of God, that was never yet, nor ever like to be. Nay, to speak plainer, he sets up a stony Semblance of a Man, void of all Sense and common feeling of Humanity. And much good to them with this Wise Man of theirs; let them enjoy him to themselves, love him without Competitors, and live with him in Plato's Common-wealth, the Countrey of Ideas, or Tantalus's Orchards. For who would not shun and startle at such a man, as at some unnatural accident or Spirit? A man

dead to all sense of Nature and common affections, and no more mov'd with Love or Pity [1] than if he were a Flint or Rock; whose censure nothing escapes; that commits no errors himself, but has a Lynx's eyes upon others; measures every thing by an exact Line, and forgives nothing; pleases himself with himself onely; the onely Rich, the onely Wise, the onely Free Man, and onely King; in brief, the onely man that is every thing, but in his own single judgment onely; that cares not for the Friendship of any man, being himself a friend to no man; makes no doubt to make the Gods stoop to him, and condemns and laughs at the whole Actions of our Life? And yet such a Beast is this their perfect Wise Man. But tell me pray, if the thing were to be carri'd by most voices, what City would chuse him for its Governour, or what Army desire him for their General? What Woman would have such a Husband, what Good-fellow such a Guest, or what Servant would either wish or endure such a Master? Nay, who had not rather have one of the middle sort of Fools, who, being a Fool himself, may

[1] Quam si dura silex aut stet Marpesia cautes.

the better know how to command or obey Fools; and who though he please his like, 'tis yet the greater number; one that is kind to his Wife, merry among his Friends, a Boon Companion, and easie to be liv'd with; and lastly one that thinks nothing of Humanity should be a stranger to him? But I am weary of this Wise Man, and therefore I'll proceed to some other advantages.

Go to then. Suppose a man in some lofty high Tower, and that he could look round him, as the Poets say Jupiter was now and then wont. To how many misfortunes would he find the life of man subject? How miserable, to say no worse, our Birth, how difficult our Education; to how many wrongs our Childhood expos'd, to what pains our Youth; how unsupportable our Old-age, and grievous our unavoidable Death? as also what Troups of Diseases beset us, how many Casualties hang over our Heads, how many Troubles invade us, and how little there is that is not steept in Gall? to say nothing of those evils one man brings upon another, as Poverty, Imprisonment, Infamy, Dishonesty, Racks, Snares, Treachery, Reproaches, Actions,

Deceipts—But I 'm got into as endless a work as numbring the Sands—For what offences Mankind have deserv'd these things, or what angry God compell'd 'em to be born into such miseries, is not my present business. Yet he that shall diligently examine it with himself, would he not, think ye, approve the example of the Milesian Virgins, and kill himself? But who are they that for no other reason but that they were weary of life, have hastned their own Fate? were they not the next Neighbours to Wisdom? amongst whom, to say nothing of Diogenes, Xenocrates, Cato, Cassius, Brutus, that Wise Man Chiron, being offer'd Immortality, chose rather to dye than be troubled with the same thing always.

And now I think ye see what would become of the World if all men should be wise; to wit 'twere necessary we got another kind of Clay and some better Potter. But I, partly through ignorance, partly unadvisedness, and sometimes through forgetfulness of evil, do now and then so sprinkle pleasure with the hopes of good, and sweeten men up in their greatest misfortunes, that they are not willing to leave this life, even

then when according to the account of the Destinys this life has left them; and by how much the less reason they have to live, by so much the more they desire it; so far are they from being sensible of the least wearisomness of life. Of my gift it is, that ye have so many old Nestors every where, that have scarce left 'em so much as the shape of a Man; Stutterers, Dotards, Toothless, Gray-hair'd, Bald; or rather, to use the words of Aristophanes,[1] 'Nasty, Crumpt, Miserable, Shrivel'd, Bald, Toothless, and wanting their Baubles': yet so delighted with life and to be thought young, that one dies his gray hairs; another covers his baldness with a Periwigg; another gets a set of new Teeth; another falls desperately in love with a young Wench, and keeps more flickering about her than a young man would have been asham'd of. For to see such an old crooked piece, with one foot in the grave, to marrie a plump young Wench, and that too without a portion, is so common that men almost expect to be commended for 't. But the best sport of all is to

[1] *ῥυπῶντας, κυφοὺς, ἀθλίους, ῥυσοὺς, μαδῶντας, νωδοὺς, καὶ ψωλοὺς.*

see our old Women, even dead with age, and such skeletons one would think they had stoln out of their graves, and ever mumbling in their mouths, [1] 'Life is sweet'; and as old as they are, still catterwawling, daily plaistering their face, scarce ever from the glasse, gossipping, dancing, and writing Love-letters. These things are laught at as foolish, as indeed they are; yet they please themselves, live merrily, swimme in pleasure, and in a word are happy, by my courtesie. But I would have them to whom these things seem ridiculous, to consider with themselves whether it be not better to live so pleasant a life, in such kind of follies, than, as the Proverb goes, 'To take a Halter and hang themselves'. Besides though these things may be subject to censure, it concerns not my fools in the least, in as much as they take no notice of it, or if they do, they easily neglect it. If a stone fall upon a man's head, that's evil indeed; but dishonesty, infamy, villany, ill reports, carrie no more hurt in them than a man is sensible of; and if a man have no sense of them, they are no longer evils. What art thou the worse [2] if

[1] φῶς ἀγαθὸν. [2] Si populus te sibilet, at tibi plaudas.

the people hisse at thee, so thou applaud thy self? And that a man be able to do so, he must ow it only to Folly.

But methinks I hear the Philosophers opposing it, and saying 'tis a miserable thing for a man to be foolish, to erre, mistake, and know nothing truly. Nay rather, this is to be a man. And why they should call it miserable, I see no reason; forasmuch as we are so born, so bred, so instructed, nay, such is the common condition of us all. And nothing can be call'd miserable that suits with its kind, unless perhaps you'l think a man such because he can neither flie with Birds, nor walk on all four with Beasts, and is not arm'd with Horns as a Bull. For by the same reason he would call the Warlike Horse unfortunate, because he understood not Grammar, nor eat Chees-cakes; and the Bull miserable, because he 'd make so ill a Wrestler. And therefore, as a Horse that has no skill in Grammar is not miserable, no more is man in this respect, for that they agree with his Nature. But again, the [1] Virtuosi may say that there was particularly added to Man the knowledge

[1] Logodaedali.

of Sciences, by whose help he might recompence himself in Understanding for what Nature cut him short in other things. As if this had the least face of truth, that Nature, that was so sollicitously watchful in the production of Gnats, Herbs and Flowers, should have so slept when she made Man, that he should have need to be helpt by Sciences, which that old Devil Theuth, the evil Genius of mankind, first invented for his Destruction, and are so little conducing to happiness that they rather obstruct it; to which purpose they are properly said to be first found out, as that wise King in Plato argues touching the invention of Letters.

Sciences therefore crept into the world with other the pests of mankind, from the same head from whence all other mischiefs spring; wee'l suppose it Devils, for so the name imports when you call them Dæmons, that is to say,[1] Knowing. For that simple people of the golden Age, being wholly ignorant of every thing call'd Learning, liv'd only by the guidance and dictates of Nature; for what use of Grammar, where every man spoke the same Language and had no

[1] δαήμονας.

further design than to understand one another? What use of Logick, where there was no bickering about the double-meaning words? What need of Rhetorick, where there were no Law-suits? Or to what purpose Laws, where there were no ill manners? from which without doubt good Laws first came. Besides, they were more religious than with an impious curiosity to dive into the secrets of Nature, the dimension of Starrs, the motions, effects, and hidden causes of things; as believing it a crime for any man to attempt to be wise beyond his condition. And as to the Inquiry of what was beyond Heaven, that madness never came into their heads. But the purity of the golden age declining by degrees, first, as I said before, Arts were invented by the evil Genii; and yet but few, and those too receiv'd by fewer. After that the Chaldean Superstition and Greek newfangledness, that had little to do, added I know not how many more; meer torments of Wit, and that so great that even Grammar alone is work enough for any man for his whole life.

Though yet amongst these Sciences those only are in esteem that come nearest to common

sense, that is to say, Folly. Divines are half starv'd, Naturalists out of heart, Astrologers laught at, and Logicians slighted; onely the Physician [1] is worth all the rest. And amongst them too, the more unlearned, impudent, or unadvised he is, the more he is esteem'd, even among Princes. For Physick, especially as it is now profest by most men, is nothing but a branch of Flattery, no less than Rhetorick. Next them, the second place is given to our Law-drivers, if not the first; whose Profession, though I say it my self, most men laugh at as the Ass of Philosophy; yet there's scarce any business, either so great or small, but is manag'd by these Asses. These purchase their great Lordships, while in the mean time the Divine, having run through the whole Body of Divinity, sits gnawing a Raddish, and is in continual Warfare with Lice and Fleas. As therefore those Arts are best that have the nearest Affinity with Folly, so are they most happy of all others that have least commerce with Sciences, and follow the guidance of Nature, who is in no wise imperfect, unless perhaps we endeavor to

[1] πολλῶν ἀντάξιος ἄλλων.

leap over those bounds she has appointed to us. Nature hates all false-colouring, and is ever best where she is least adulterated with Art.

Go to then, don't ye find among the several kinds of living Creatures, that they thrive best that understand no more than what Nature taught them? What is more prosperous or wonderful than the Bee? And though they have not the same judgement of sense as other Bodies have, yet wherein hath Architecture gone beyond their building of Houses? What Philosopher ever founded the like Republique? Whereas the Horse, that comes so near man in understanding and is therefore so familiar with him, is also partaker of his misery. For while he thinks it a shame to lose the Race, it often happens that he cracks his wind; and in the Battel, while he contends for Victory, he's cut down himself, and, together with his Rider, [1] 'lies biting the earth': not to mention those strong Bits, sharp Spurrs, close Stables, Arms, Blows, Rider, and briefly, all that slavery he willingly submits to, while, imitating those men of Valour, he so eagerly strives to be reveng'd of the Enemy.

[1] terram ore momordit.

Than which how much more were the life of flies or birds to be wish'd for, who living by the instinct of Nature look no further than the present, if yet man would but let 'em alone in 't. And if at any time they chance to be taken, and being shut up in Cages endeavour to imitate our speaking, 'tis strange how they degenerate from their native gaiety. So much better in every respect are the works of Nature than the adulteries of Art.

In like manner I can never sufficiently praise that Pythagoras in a Dung-hill Cock, who being but one had been yet every thing; a Philosopher, a Man, a Woman, a King, a private man, a Fish, a Horse, a Frog, and I believe too, a Sponge; and at last concluded that no Creature was more miserable than man, for that all other Creatures are content with those bounds that Nature set them, onely Man endeavours to exceed them. And again, among men he gives the precedency not to the learned or the great, but the Fool. Nor had that Gryllus less wit than [1]Ulysses with his many counsels, who chose rather to lie grunting in a Hog-sty than be

[1] πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεὺς.

expos'd with t' other to so many hazzards. Nor does Homer, that Father of trifles, dissent from me; who not only call'd all men [1]'wretched and full of calamity', but often his great pattern of Wisedom, Ulysses, [2]'Miserable'; Paris, Ajax, and Achilles no where. And why, I pray? but that, like a cunning fellow and one that was his craft's-master, he did nothing without the advice of Pallas. In a word he was too wise, and by that means ran wide of Nature. As therefore amongst men they are least happy that study Wisedom, as being in this twice-Fools, that when they are born men they should yet so far forget their condition as to affect the life of Gods; and after the Example of the Gyants, with their Philosophical gimcracks make a War upon Nature: so they on the other side seem as little miserable as is possible, who come nearest to Beasts and never attempt any thing beyond Man. Go to then, let's try how demonstrable this is; not by Enthymems or the imperfect Syllogisms of the Stoicks, but by plain, downright and ordinary Examples.

And now, by the immortal Gods! I think

[1] δειλοὺς καὶ μοχθηροὺς. [2] δύστηνον.

nothing more happy than that generation of men we commonly call fools, ideots, lack-wits and dolts; splendid Titles too, as I conceive 'em. I'le tell ye a thing, which at first perhaps may seem foolish and absurd, yet nothing more true. And first they are not afraid of death; no small evil, by Jupiter! They are not tormented with the conscience of evil acts; not terrify'd with the fables of Ghosts, nor frighted with Spirits and Goblins. They are not distracted with the fear of evils to come, nor the hopes of future good. In short they are not disturb'd with those thousand of cares to which this life is subject. They are neither modest, nor fearful, nor ambitious, nor envious, nor love they any man. And lastly if they should come nearer even to the very ignorance of Brutes, they could not sin, for so hold the Divines. And now tell me, thou wise fool, with how many troublesome cares thy mind is continually perplext; heap together all the discommodities of thy life, and then thou'lt be sensible from how many evils I have delivered my Fools. Add to this that they are not onely merry, play, sing, and laugh themselves, but make mirth

where ever they come, a special priviledge it seems the Gods have given 'em to refresh the pensiveness of life. Whence it is, that whereas the world is so differently affected one towards another,—that all men indifferently admit them as their companions, desire, feed, cherish, embrace them, take their parts upon all occasions, and permit 'em without offence to do or say what they list. And so little doth every thing desire to hurt them, that even the very Beasts, by a kind of natural instinct of their innocence no doubt, pass by their injuries. For of them it may be truly said that they are consecrate to the Gods, and therefore and not without cause do men have 'em in such esteem. Whence is it else that they are in so great request with Princes, that they can neither eat nor drink, go any whither, or be an hour without them? Nay, and in some degree they prefer these Fools before their crabbish Wise-men, whom yet they keep about them for State-sake. Nor do I conceive the reason so difficult, or that it should seem strange why they are prefer'd before t' others, for that these wise men speak to Princes about nothing but grave, serious

matters, and trusting to their own parts and learning do not fear sometimes [1]'to grate their tender ears with smart truths'; but fools fit 'em with that they most delight in, as jeasts, laughter, abuses of other men, wanton pastimes, and the like.

Again, take notice of this no contemptible blessing which Nature hath giv'n fools, that they are the only plain, honest men and such as speak truth. And what is more commendable than truth? for though that Proverb of Alcibiades in Plato attributes Truth to Drunkards and Children, yet the praise of it is particularly mine, even from the testimony of Euripides; amongst whose other things there is extant that his honourable saying concerning us, [2]'A fool speaks foolish things'. For whatever a fool has in his heart, he both shews it in his looks and expresses it in his discourse; while the wise men's are those two Tongues which the same Euripides mentions, whereof the one speaks truth, the other what they judge most seasonable for the occasion. These are they

[1] Auriculas teneras mordaci radere vero.

[2] *μωρὰ γὰρ μωρὸς λέγει.*

[1] 'that turn black into white', blow hot and cold with the same breath, and carry a far different meaning in their Breast from what they feign with their Tongue. Yet in the midst of all their prosperity, Princes in this respect seem to me most unfortunate, because, having no one to tell them truth, they are forc't to receive flatterers for friends.

But, some one may say, the ears of Princes are strangers to truth, and for this reason they avoid those Wise men, because they fear lest some one more frank than the rest should dare to speak to them things rather true than pleasant; for so the matter is, that they don't much care for truth. And yet this is found by experience among my Fools, that not onely Truths but even open reproaches are heard with pleasure; so that the same thing which, if it came from a wise man's mouth might prove a Capital Crime, spoken by a Fool is receiv'd with delight. For Truth carries with it a certain peculiar Power of pleasing, if no Accident fall in to give occasion of offence; which faculty the Gods have given onely to Fools. And for the same reasons is it

[1] qui nigrum in candida vertunt.

that Women are so earnestly delighted with this kind of Men, as being more propense by Nature to Pleasure and Toyes. And whatsoever they may happen to do with them, although sometimes it be of the seriousest, yet they turn it to Jest and Laughter ; as that Sexe was ever quick-witted, especially to colour their own faults.

But to return to the happiness of Fools, who when they have past over this life with a great deal of Pleasantness, and without so much as the least fear or sense of Death, they go straight forth into the Elysian Field, to recreate their Pious and Careless Souls with such Sports as they us'd here. Let's proceed then, and compare the condition of any of your Wise Men with that of this Fool. Fancy to me now some example of Wisdome you'd set up against him ; one that had spent his Childhood and Youth in learning the Sciences ; and lost the sweetest part of his life in Watchings, Cares, Studies ; and for the remaining part of it never so much as tasted the least of pleasure ; ever sparing, poor, sad, sowre, unjust and rigorous to himself, and troublesome and hateful to others ; broken with Paleness, Leanness, Crasiness, sore Eyes,

and an Old-age and Death contracted before their time (though yet, what matter is it, when he dye that never liv'd?); and such is the Picture of this great Wise Man.

And here again [1] do those Frogs of the Stoicks croak at me, and say that nothing is more miserable than Madness. But Folly is the next degree, if not the very thing. For what else is Madness than for a man to be out of his wits? But to let 'em see how they are clean out of the way, with the Muses' good favour we'll take this Syllogism in pieces. Subtilly argu'd, I must confess, but as Socrates in Plato teaches us how by splitting one Venus and one Cupid to make two of either, in like manner should those Logicians have done, and distinguisht Madness from Madness, if at least they would be thought to be well in their wits themselves. For all Madness is not miserable, or Horace had never call'd his Poetical fury [2] a beloved Madness; nor Plato plac'd the Raptures of Poets, Prophets and Lovers amongst the chiefest Blessings of this Life; nor that Sybil in Virgil call'd Æneas's Travels Mad Labours. But there

[1] οἱ ἐκ τῆς στοᾶς βάτραχοι. [2] amabilis insania.

are two sorts of Madness; the one that which the revengeful Furies send privily from Hell, as often as they let loose their Snakes, and put into men's breasts either the desire of War, or an insatiate thirst after Gold, or some dishonest Love, or Parricide, or Incest, or Sacriledge, or the like Plagues, or when they terrifie some guilty soul with the Conscience of his Crimes; the other, but nothing like this, that which comes from me, and is of all other things the most desirable; which happens as oft as some pleasing dotage not onely clears the mind of its troublesome cares, but renders it more jocund. And this was that which, as a special blessing of the Gods, Cicero, writing to his friend Atticus, wisht to himself, that he might be the less sensible of those miseries that then hung over the Common-wealth.

Nor was that Grecian in Horace much wide of it, who was so far mad that he would sit by himself whole daies in the Theatre laughing and clapping his hands, as if he had seen some Tragedy acting, whereas in truth there was nothing presented; yet in other things a man well enough, pleasant among his Friends, kind

to his Wife, and so good a Master to his Servants, [1] that if they had broken the Seal of his Bottle he would not have run mad for 't. But at last, when by the care of his Friends and Physick he was freed from his Distemper, and become his own man again, he thus expostulates with them: [2] 'Now, by Pollux, my Friends, ye have rather kill'd than preserv'd me, in thus forcing me from my pleasure'. By which you see he lik'd it so well that he lost it against his will. And trust me, I think they were the madder o' th' two, and had the greater need of Hellebore, that should offer to look upon so pleasant a madness as an evil to be remov'd by Physick; though yet I have not determin'd whether every Distemper of the Sense or Understanding be to be call'd Madnesse.

For neither he that having weak eyes should take a Mule for an Ass, nor he that should admire an insipid Poem as excellent, would be presently thought mad; but he that not onely erreth in his senses, but is deceived also in his judgment,

[1] signo laeso non insanire lagenae.

[2] Pol, me occidistis, amici,
Non servastis, ait, cui sic extorta voluptas.

and that too more than ordinary and upon all occasions,—he, I must confess, would be thought to come very near to it. As if any one hearing an Ass bray should take it for excellent musick, or a Begger conceive himself a King. And yet this kind of madness, if, as it commonly happens, it turn to pleasure, it brings a great delight not onely to them that are possest with it, but to those also that behold it ; though perhaps they may not be altogether so mad as the other, for the Species of this madness is much larger than the people take it to be. For one mad man laughs at another, and beget themselves a mutual pleasure. Nor does it seldom happen, that he that is the more mad, laughs at him that is lesse mad. And in this every man is the more happy, in how many respects the more he is mad ; and if I were judge in the case, he should be rang'd in that Classis of Folly that is peculiarly mine; which in troth is so large and universal, that I scarce know any one in all mankind that is wise at all hours, or has not some tang or other of madness.

And to this Classis do they appertain that sleight every thing in comparison of hunting, and protest they take an unimaginable pleasure

to hear the yell of the Horns and the yelps of the Hounds, and I believe could pick somewhat extraordinary out of their very excrement. And then what pleasure they take to see a Buck or the like unlac'd? Let ordinary fellows cut up an Ox or a Weather, 'twere a crime to have this done by any thing less than a Gentleman! who with his Hat off, on his bare knees, and a Cuttoe for that purpose (for every Sword or Knife is not allowable), with a curious superstition and certain postures, layes open the several parts in their respective order; while they that hemm him in admire it with silence, as some new religious Ceremony, though perhaps they have seen it an hundred times before. And if any of 'em chance to get the least piece of 't, he presently thinks himself no small Gentleman. In all which they drive at nothing more than to become Beasts themselves, while yet they imagin they live the life of Princes.

And next these may be reckon'd those that have such an itch of Building; one while changing Rounds into Squares, and presently again [1] Squares into Rounds; never knowing either

[1] quadrata rotundis.

measure or end, till at last, reduc'd to the utmost poverty, there remains not to them so much as a place where they may lay their head, or wherewith to fill their bellyes. And why all this? but that they may pass over a few years in feeding their foolish fancies.

And, in my opinion, next these may be reckon'd such as with their new inventions and occult arts undertake to change the forms of things, and hunt all about after a certain fifth Essence; Men so bewitcht with this present hope that it never repents them of their pains or expence, but are ever contriving how they may cheat themselves; till, having spent all, there is not enough left them to provide another furnace. And yet they have not done dreaming these their pleasant Dreams, but encourage others, as much as in them lies, to the same Happiness. And at last, when they are quite lost in all their Expectations, they chear up themselves with this Sentence, [1] 'In great things the very attempt is enough'; and then complain of the shortness of man's life, that is not sufficient for so great an Undertaking.

[1] In magnis vel voluisse sat est.

And then for Gamesters, I am a little doubtful whether they are to be admitted into our Colledge; and yet 'tis a foolish and ridiculous sight to see some addicted so to 't, that they can no sooner hear the ratling of the Dice but their heart leaps and dances again. And then when time after time they are so far drawn on with the hopes of winning that they have made shipwrack of all, and having split their Ship on that Rock of Dice, [1] no less terrible than the Bishop and 's Clerks, scarce got alive to shore, they chuse rather to cheat any man of their just Debts than not pay the money they lost, lest otherwise, forsooth, they be thought no men of their words. Again what is it, I pray, to see old fellows and half blind to play with Spectacles? Nay and when a justly-deserv'd Gout has knotted their Knuckles, to hire a Caster, or one that may put the Dice in the Box for them? A pleasant thing, I must confess, did it not for the most part end in quarrels, and therefore belongs rather to the Furies than Me.

But there is no doubt but that that kind of men are wholly ours, who love to hear or tell

[1] non paulo formidabiliorem Malea.

feign'd Miracles and strange lyes, and are never weary of any Tale, though never so long, so it be of Ghosts, Spirits, Goblings, Devils, or the like; which the farther they are from truth, the more readily they are believ'd and the more do they tickle their itching ears. And these serve not only to pass away time, but bring profit, especially to Masse Priests and Pardoners. And next to these are they that have gotten a foolish but pleasant perswasion, that if they can but see a Wodden or painted Polypheme Christopher, they shall not die that day; or do but salute a carv'd-Barbara, in the usual set Form, that he shall return safe from Battail; or make his application to Erasmus on certain days with some small Wax Candles and proper Prayers, that he shall quickly be rich. Nay, they have gotten an Hercules, another Hippolytus, and a St. George, whose Horse most religiously set out with Trappings and Bosses there wants little but they worship; however, they endeavour to make him their friend by some Present or other; and to swear by his Master's Brazen Helmet is an Oath for a Prince. Or what should I say of them that hugg them-

selves with their counterfeit Pardons; that have measur'd Purgatory by an Hour-glass, and can without the least mistake demonstrate its Ages, Years, Moneths, Days, Hours, Minutes, and Seconds, as it were in a Mathematical Table? Or what of those who, having confidence in certain Magical charms and short Prayers invented by some pious Impostour, either for his Soul's health or profit's sake, promise to themselves every thing: Wealth, Honour, Pleasure, Plenty, good Health, long Life, lively Old-age, and the next place to Christ in the other World, which yet they desire may not happen too soon, that is to say before the pleasures of this life have left them?

And now suppose some Merchant, Souldier, or Judge, out of so many Rapines, parts with some small piece of money. He straight conceives all that sink of his whole life quite cleans'd; so many Perjuries, so many Lusts, so many Debaucheries, so many Contentions, so many Murders, so many Deceipts, so many breaches of Trust, so many Treacheries bought off, as it were by compact; and so bought off that they may begin upon a new score. But what is

more foolish than those, or rather more happy, who daily reciting those seven verses of the Psalms promise to themselves more than the top of Felicity? which Magical verses some Devil or other, a merry one without doubt but more a Blab of his Tongue than crafty, is believ'd to have discover'd to St. Bernard, but not without a Trick. And these are so foolish that I am half asham'd of 'em my self, and yet they are approv'd, and that not onely by the common people, but even the Professors of Religion. And what, are not they also almost the same where several Countryes avouch to themselves their peculiar Saint, and as every one of them has his particular gift, so also his particular Form of Worship? As, one is good for the Tooth-ach; another, for Groaning-women; a third, for Stollen Goods; a fourth, for making a Voyage Prosperous; and a fifth, to cure Sheep of the Rot; and so of the rest, for it would be too tedious to run over all. And some there are that are good for more things than one; but chiefly, the Virgin Mother, to whom the common people do in a manner attribute more than to the Son.

Yet what do they beg of these Saints but what belongs to Folly? To examine it a little. Among all those offerings which are so frequently hung up in Churches, nay up to the very Roof of some of 'em, did you ever see the least acknowledgment from any one that had left his Folly, or grown a Hair's-breadth the wiser? One scapes a Shipwrack, and gets safe to Shore. Another, run through in a Duel, recovers. Another, while the rest were fighting, ran out of the Field, no less luckily than valiantly. Another, condemn'd to be hang'd, by the favour of some Saint or other, a friend to Thieves, got off himself by impeaching his fellows. Another escap'd by breaking Prison. Another recover'd from his Feaver in spight of his Physitian. Another's poison turning to a loosness prov'd his Remedy rather than Death; and that to his Wife's no small sorrow, in that she lost both her labour and her charge. Another's Cart broke, and he sav'd his Horses. Another preserv'd from the fall of a House. All these hang up their Tablets, but no one gives thanks for his recovery from Folly; so sweet a thing it is not to be Wise, that on the contrary men rather pray against any thing than Folly.

But why do I lanch out into this Ocean of Superstitions? [1]Had I an hundred Tongues, as many Mouthes, and a Voice never so strong, yet were I not able to run over the several sorts of Fools, or all the names of Folly; so thick do they swarm every where. And yet our Priests make no scruple to receive and cherish 'em, as proper instruments of profit; whereas if some scurvy Wise fellow should step up, and speak things as they are, as, To live well is the way to dye well; The best way to get quit of sin is to add to the money thou giv'st, the Hatred of sin, Tears, Watchings, Prayers, Fastings, and amendment of life; Such or such a Saint will favour thee, if thou imitatest his life;—these, I say, and the like, should this Wise man chat to the people, from what happiness into how great troubles would he draw 'em?

Of this Colledge also are they who in their lifetime appoint with what solemnity they'll be buried, and particularly set down how many Torches, how many Mourners, how many

[1] Non mihi si centum linguae sint, oraque centum,
Ferrea vox, omnes fatuorum evolvere formas,
Omnia stultitiae percurrere nomina possim:

Singers, how many Alms-men they will have at it; as if any sense of it could come to them, or that it were a shame to them that their Corpse were not honourably interr'd; so curious are they herein, as if, like the Ædiles of old, these were to present some Shews or Banquet to the people.

And though I am in hast, yet I cannot yet pass by them who, though they differ nothing from the meanest Cobler, yet 'tis scarcely credible how they flatter themselves with the empty Title of Nobility. One derives his Pedegree from Æneas, another from Brutus, a third from [1] the Star by the Tail of Ursa Major. They shew you on every side the Statues and Pictures of their Ancestours; run over their great Grandfathers and great great Grandfathers of both Lines, and the Antient Matches of their Families; when themselves yet are but once remov'd from a Statue, if not worse than those trifles they boast of. And yet by means of this pleasant self-love they live a happy life. Nor are they less Fools who admire these Beasts as if they were Gods.

But what do I speak of any one or 'tother

[1] ad Arcturum.

particular kind of men, as if this self-Love had not the same effect every where, and render'd most men superabundantly happy? As when a fellow, more deform'd than a Baboon, shall believe himself handsomer than Homer's Nireus. Another, as soon as he can draw two or three lines with a Compass, presently think himself an Euclid. A third, [1] that understands Musick no more than my Horse, and for his voice [2] as hoarse as a Dunghil-Cock, shall yet conceive himself another Hermogenes. But of all madness that's the most pleasant, when a man, seeing another any way excellent in what he pretends to himself, makes his boasts of it as confidently as if it were his own. And such was that rich fellow in Seneca, who when ever he told a story had his servants at his elbow to prompt him the names; and to that height had they flatter'd him, that he did not question but he might venture a rubber at cuffs, a man otherwise so weak he could scarce stand, onely presuming on this, that he had a company of sturdy servants about him.

[1] Ὄνος πρὸς λύραν.

[2] Quo deterius nec
Ille sonat, quo mordetur gallina marito.

Or to what purpose is it I should mind ye of our professors of Arts? Forasmuch as this Self-love is so natural to them all, that they had rather part with their Father's land than their foolish Opinions; but chiefly Players, Fidlers, Orators, and Poets, of which the more ignorant each of them is, the more insolently he pleases himself, that is to say Vaunts and Spreads out his Plumes. And [1] like lips find like Lettice; nay, the more foolish any thing is, the more 'tis admir'd; the greater number being ever tickled at the worst things, because, as I said before, most men are so subject to Folly. And therefore if the more foolish a man is, the more he pleases himself and is admir'd by others, to what purpose should he beat his brains about true knowledg, which first will cost him dear, and next render him the more troublesome and less confident, and, lastly, please onely a few?

And now I consider it, Nature has planted, not onely in particular men but even in every Nation, and scarce any City is there without it, a kind of common self-love. And hence is it that the English, besides other things, particularly

[1] Inveniunt similes labra lactucas.

challenge to themselves Beauty, Musick, and Feasting. The Scots are proud of their Nobility, Alliance to the Crown, and Logical Subtilties. The French think themselves the onely well-bred men. The Parisians, excluding all others, arrogate to themselves the onely knowledg of Divinity. The Italians affirm they are the onely Masters of good Letters and Eloquence, and flatter themselves on this account, that of all others they onely are not barbarous. In which kind of happiness those of Rome claim the first place, still dreaming to themselves of somewhat, I know not what, of old Rome. The Venetians fancy themselves happy in the opinion of their Nobility. The Greeks, as if they were the onely Authors of Sciences, swell themselves with the Titles of the Ancient Heroes. The Turk, and all that sink of the truly barbarous, challenge to themselves the onely glory of Religion, and laugh at Christians as superstitious. And much more pleasantly the Jews expect to this day the coming of the Messias, and so obstinately contend for their Law of Moses. The Spaniards give place to none in the reputation of Souldiery. The Germans

pride themselves in their Talness of Stature and skill in Magick.

And, not to instance in every particular, you see, I conceive, how much satisfaction this Self-love, who has a Sister also not unlike her self call'd Flattery, begets every where; for Self-love is no more than the soothing of a man's self, which, done to another, is flattery. And though perhaps at this day it may be thought infamous, yet it is so only with them that are more taken with words than things. They think truth is inconsistent with flattery; but that it is much otherwise we may learn from the examples of brute Beasts. What more fawning than a Dog? and yet what more trusty? What has more of those little tricks than a Squirrel? and yet what more loving to man? Unless, perhaps you'll say, Men had better converse with fierce Lions, merciless Tigers, and furious Leopards. For that flattery is the most pernicious of all things, by means of which some treacherous persons and mockers have run the credulous into such mischief. But this of mine proceeds from a certain gentleness and uprightness of mind, and comes nearer to Vertue than

its opposite, Austerity, or a Morose and troublesome peevishness, as Horace calls it. This supports the dejected, relieves the distressed, encourages the fainting, awakens the stupid, refreshes the sick, supples the untractable, joyns loves together, and keeps them so joyn'd. It entices children to take their learning, makes old men frolick, and, under the colour of praise, does without offence both tell Princes their faults and shew them the way to amend 'em. In short, it makes every man the more jocund and acceptable to himself, which is the chiefest point of felicity. Agen, what is more friendly than when [1] two horses scrub one another? And to say nothing of it, that it's a main part of that fam'd eloquence, the better part of Physick, and the onely thing in Poetry; 'tis the delight and relish of all humane Society.

But 'tis a sad thing, they say, to be mistaken. Nay rather, he is most miserable that is not so. For they are quite beside the mark that place the Happiness of men in Things themselves, since it onely depends upon Opinion. For so great is the obscurity and variety of humane

[1] Mutuum muli scabunt.

affairs, that nothing can be clearly known, as it is truly said by our Academicks, the least insolent of all the Philosophers; or if it could, it would but obstruct the pleasure of life. Lastly, the mind of man is so fram'd that it is rather taken with false colours than truth; of which if any one has a mind to make the experiment, let him go to Church and hear Sermons, in which if there be any thing serious deliver'd, the Auditory is either asleep, yawning, or weary of 't; but if the Preacher—pardon my mistake, I would have said Declaimer—, as too often it happens, fall but into an old Wife's story, they 're presently awake, prick up their ears and gape after it. In like manner, if there be any Poetical Saint, or one of whom there goes more stories than ordinary, as for example, a George, a Christopher, or a Barbara, you shall see him more religiously worshipp'd than Peter, Paul, or even Christ himself. But these things are not for this place.

And now at how cheap a rate is this happiness purchast! Forasmuch as to the thing it self a man's whole endeavour is requir'd, be it never so inconsiderable; but the opinion of it is

easily taken up, which yet conduceth as much or more to happiness. For suppose a man were eating rotten Stockfish, the very smell of which would choak another, and yet believ'd it a dish for the Gods, what difference is there as to his happiness? Whereas on the contrary, if another's stomack should turn at a Sturgion, wherein, I pray, is he happier than t' other? If a man have a crooked, ill-favour'd Wife, who yet in his Eye may stand in competition with Venus, is it not the same as if she were truly beautiful? Or if seeing an ugly, ill-painted piece, he should admire the work as believing it some great Master's hand, were he not much happier, think ye, than they that buy such things at vast rates, and yet perhaps reap less pleasure from 'em than t' other? I know one of my name that gave his new marri'd Wife some counterfeit Jewels, and, as he was a pleasant Droll, perswaded her that they were not onely right, but of an inestimable price; and what difference, I pray, to her, that was as well pleas'd and contented with Glass, and kept it as warily as if 't 'ad been a treasure? In the mean time the Husband sav'd his money, and had this advantage

of her folly, that he oblig'd her as much as if he had bought 'em at a great rate. Or what difference, think ye, between those in Plato's imaginary Cave, that stand gaping at the Shadows and Figures of things, so they please themselves and have no need to wish; and that Wise Man, who, being got loose from 'em, sees things truly as they are? Whereas that Cobler in Lucian, if he might always have continu'd his Golden Dreams, he would never have desir'd any other happiness. So then there is no difference; or, if there be, the Fools ha' the 'vantage: first, in that their happiness costs them least, that is to say, onely some small perswasion; next, that they enjoy it in common. And the possession of no good can be delightful without a companion. For who does not know what a dearth there is of Wise men, if yet any one be to be found? and though the Greeks for these so many ages have accounted upon seaven only, yet so help me Hercules, do but examine 'em narrowly, and I'll be hang'd if ye find one half-witted fellow, nay or so much as one quarter of a Wise man, amongst 'em all.

For whereas among the many praises of

Bacchus they reckon this the chief, that he washeth away cares, and that too in an instant; do but sleep off his weak spirits, and they come on agen, [1] as we say, on horseback. But how much larger and more present is the benefit ye receive by me, since, as it were with a perpetual drunkenness, I fill your minds with Mirth, Fancies and Jollities, and that too without any trouble? Nor is there any man living whom I let be without it; whereas the gifts of the Gods are scambled, some to one and some to another. The sprightly delicious Wine that drives away cares and leaves such a Flavour behind it, grows not every where. Beauty, the gift of Venus, happens to few; and to fewer gives Mercury Eloquence. Hercules makes not every one rich. Homer's Jupiter bestows not Empire on all men. Mars oftentimes favours neither side. Many return sad from Apollo's Oracle. Phoebus sometimes shoots a Plague amongst us. Neptune drowns more than he saves: to say nothing of those [2] mischievous Gods, Plutoes, Ates, Punishments, Feavours and the like, not Gods but Executioners. I

[1] albis, ut aiunt, quadrigis. [2] Vaejoves.

am that only Folly that so readily and indifferently bestow my benefits on all. Nor do I look to be entreated, or am I subject to take pett, and require an expiatory sacrifice if some Ceremony be omitted. Nor do I [1] beat heaven and earth together, if, when the rest of the Gods are invited, I am past by or not admitted to the steam of their Sacrifices. For the rest of the Gods are so curious in this point, that such an omission may chance to spoil a man's business; and therefore one had as good ev'n let 'em alone as worship 'em: just like some men, who are so hard to please, and withall so ready to do mischief, that 'tis better be a stranger than have any familiarity with 'em.

But no man, you'll say, ever sacrific'd to Folly, or built me a Temple. And troth, as I said before, I cannot but wonder at the ingratitude; yet because I am easie to be entreated, I take this also in good part, though truelie I can scarce request it. For why should I require Incense, Wafers, a Goat or Sow, when all men pay me that worship every where, which is so much approv'd even by our very Divines? Unless perhaps

[1] coelum terris et mare coelo.

I should envy Diana, that her Sacrifices are mingled with Humane blood. Then do I conceive my self most religiouslie worshipp'd, when every where, as 'tis generally done, men embrace me in their Minds, express me in their Manners, and represent me in their Lives; which worship of the Saints is not so ordinary among Christians. How many are there that burn Candles to the Virgin Mother, and that too at noon day, when there 's no need of 'em! But how few are there that studie to imitate her in pureness of Life, Humility and love of Heavenlie things, which is the true worship and most acceptable to Heaven! Besides why should I desire a Temple, when the whole world is my Temple, and I'm deceiv'd or 'tis a goodly one? Nor can I want Priests, but in a Land where there are no men. Nor am I yet so foolish as to require Statues or painted Images, which do often obstruct my Worship, since among the stupid and gross multitude those Figures are worshipt for the Saints themselves. And so it would fare with me, as it doth with them that are turn'd out of doors by their Substitutes. No, I have Statues enough, and as many as there are Men;

every one bearing my lively Resemblance in his Face, how unwilling so ever he be to the contrary. And therefore there is no reason why I should envie the rest of the Gods, if in particular places they have their particular worship, and that too on set-days—as Phoebus at Rhodes; at Cyprus, Venus; at Argos, Juno; at Athens, Minerva; in Olympus, Jupiter; at Tarentum, Neptune; and near the Hellespont, Priapus—; as long as the World in general performs me every day much better Sacrifices.

Wherein notwithstanding if I shall seem to any one to have spoken more boldlie than trulie, let us, if ye please, look a little into the lives of men, and it will easily appear not onely how much they owe to me, but how much they esteem me even from the highest to the lowest. And yet we will not run over the lives of everie one, for that would be too long; but onelie some few of the great ones, from whence we shall easilie conjecture the rest. For to what purpose is it to say any thing of the common people, who without dispute are whollie mine? For they abound every where with so many several sorts of Folly, and are everie day so busie

in inventing new, that a thousand Democriti are too few for so general a laughter, though there were another Democritus to laugh at them too. 'Tis almost incredible what Sport and Pastime they dailie make the Gods; for though they set aside their sober forenoon hours to dispatch business and receive prayers, yet when they begin to be well whitled with Nectar, and cannot think of anything that's serious, they get 'em up into some part of Heaven that has better prospect than other, and thence look down upon the actions of men. Nor is there anie thing that pleases 'em better. Good, good! what an excellent sight 'tis! How many several Hurlie-burlies of Fools! for I my self sometimes sit among those Poetical Gods.

Here's one desperatelie in love with a young Wench, and the more she sleights him the more outragiouslie he loves her. Another marries a woman's money, not her self. Another's jealousie keeps more eyes on her than Argos Another becomes a Mourner, and how foolishlie he carries it! nay, hires others to bear him companie, to make it more ridiculous. Another weeps over his Mother in Law's Grave. Another

spends all he can rap and run on his Bellie, to be the more hungry after it. Another thinks there is no happiness but in sleep and idleness. Another turmoils himself about other men's business, and neglects his own. Another thinks himself rich in taking up moneys and changing Securities, as we say borrowing of Peter to pay Paul, and in a short time becomes bankrupt. Another starves himself to enrich his Heir. Another for a small and incertain gain exposes his life to the casualties of Seas and Winds, which yet no money can restore. Another had rather get Riches by War than live peaceably at home. And some there are that think them easiest attain'd by courting old childless men with Presents; and others again by making rich old women believe they love 'm; both which afford the Gods most excellent pastime, to see them cheated by those persons they thought to have over-cach't. But the most foolish and basest of all others are our Merchants, to wit such as venture on every thing be it never so dishonest, and manage it no better; who though they lie by no allowance, swear and forswear, steal, cozen, and cheat, yet shufle them-

selves into the first rank, and all because they have Gold Rings on their Fingers. Nor are they without their flattering Friers that admire them and give 'em openly the title of Honourable, in hopes, no doubt, to get some small snip of 't themselves.

There are also a kind of Pythagoreans, with whom all things are so common, that if they get any thing under their Cloaks, they make no more scruple of carrying it away than if 'twere their own by inheritance. There are others too that are onely rich in conceit, and while they fancie to themselves pleasant dreams, conceive that enough to make them happy. Some desire to be accounted wealthy abroad, and are yet ready to starve at home. One makes what haste he can to set all going, and another rakes it together by right or wrong. This man is ever labouring for publick honours; and another lies sleeping in a Chimney-corner. A great many undertake endless Suites, and outvie one another who shall most enrich the Delatory Judge or Corrupt Advocate. One is all for Innovations; and another for some great-he-knows-not-what. Another leaves his Wife and Children at home, and goes to Jerusalem, Rome, or in Pilgrimage

to St. James's, where he has no business. In short, if a man like Menippus of old could look down from the Moon, and behold those innumerable rufflings of Mankind, he would think he saw a swarm of Flies and Gnats quarrelling among themselves, fighting, laying Traps for one another, snatching, playing, wantoning, growing up, falling, and dying. Nor is it to be believ'd what stir, what broils this little creature raiseth, and yet in how short a time it comes to nothing its self; while sometimes War, othertimes Pestilence, sweeps off many thousands of 'em together.

But let me be most foolish my self, and one whom Democritus may not onely laugh at but flout, if I go one foot further in the discovery of the Follies and Madnesses of the common people. I'll betake me to them that carry the reputation of Wise men, and hunt after that golden Bough, as says the Proverb. Amongst whom the Grammarians hold the first place, a generation of men than whom nothing would be more miserable, nothing more perplext, nothing more hated of the Gods, did not I allay the troubles of that pittiful Profession with a certain

kind of pleasant madness. For they are not onely subject to those [1] five curses with which Homer begins his Iliads, as says the Greek Epigramme, but six hundred; as being ever hunger-starv'd, and slovens in their Schools —Schools, did I say? Nay, rather [2] Cloisters, Bridwells or Slaughter-houses—, grown old among a company of boyes, deaf with their noise, and pin'd away with stench and nastiness. And yet by my courtesie it is that they think themselves the most excellent of all men; so greatly do they please themselves in frighting a company of fearful boyes, with a thundring voice and big looks; tormenting them with Ferules, Rods, and Whips; and, laying about 'em without fear or wit, imitate the Ass in the Lion's skin. In the mean time all that nastiness seems absolute Spruceness, that Stench a Perfume, and that miserable slaverie a Kingdom, and such too as they would not change their Tyrannie for Phalaris' or Dionysius's Empire. Nor are they less happy in that new Opinion they have taken up of being learned; for whereas most of 'em beat into boys' heads nothing but foolish Toyes,

[1] πέντε κατάραις. [2] φροντιστηρίοις.

yet, ye good Gods! what Palemon, what Donatus, do they not scorn in comparison of themselves? And so, I know not by what tricks, they bring it about that to their boys' foolish Mothers and dolt-headed Fathers they pass for such as they fancy themselves. Add to this that other pleasure of theirs, that if any of 'em happen to find out who was Anchises's Mother, or pick out of some worm-eaten Manuscript a word not commonly known, as suppose it Bubsequa for a Cowheard, Bovinator for a Wrangler, Manticulator for a Cutpurse; or dig up the ruines of some ancient Monument, with the letters half eaten out; O Jupiter! what towrings! what triumphs! what commendations! as if they had conquer'd Africa, or taken in Babylon.

But what of this when they give up and down their foolish insipid verses, and there wants not others that admire 'em as much? They believe presently that Virgil's soul is transmigrated into them! But nothing like this, when with mutual complements they praise, admire and claw one another. Whereas if another do but slip a word, and one more quick-sighted than

the rest discover it by accident, [1] O Hercules! what uproars, what bickerings, what taunts, what invectives! If I lye, let me have the ill will of all the Grammarians. I knew in my time [2] one of many Arts, a Grecian, a Latinist, a Mathematician, a Philosopher, a Physitian, [3] a Man master of 'em all, and sixty years of age, who, laying by all the rest, perplext and tormented himself for above twenty years in the study of Grammar; fully reckoning himself a Prince if he might but live so long till he could certainly determine how the Eight parts of Speech were to be distinguisht, which none of the Greeks or Latines had yet fully clear'd: as if it were a matter to be decided by the Sword, if a man made an Adverb of a Conjunction. And for this cause is it that we have as many Grammars as Grammarians; nay more, forasmuch as my friend Aldus has giv'n us above five, not passing by any kind of Grammar, how barbarously or tediously soever compil'd, which he has not turn'd over and examin'd; envying every man's attempts in this kind, how

[1] Ἡράκλεις. [2] πολυτεχνότατον quendam.
[3] καὶ ταῦτα βασιλικὸν.

foolish so ever, and desperately concern'd for fear another should forestal him of his glory, and the labours of so many years perish. And now, whether had you rather call this Madness or Folly? It is no great matter to me whether, so long as ye confess it is by my means that a creature, otherwise the most miserable of all others, is rais'd to that height of felicity that he has no desire to change his condition with the King of Persia.

The Poets, I must confess, are not altogether so much beholding to me, though 'tis agreed of all hands they are of my partie too; because they are a free kind of people, not restrain'd or limited to any thing, and all their studies aim at nothing more than to tickle the ears of fools with meer trifles and ridiculous fables. And yet they are so bold upon 't, that you'll scarce believe how they not onely assure themselves of immortality and a life like the Gods, but promise it to others too. And to this order, before all others, Self-love and Flattery are more peculiarly appendant; nor am I worshipt by any sort of men with more plainness or greater constancy.

And then, for the Rhetoricians, though they now and then shuffle and cut with the Philosopher, yet that these two are of my faction also, though many other Arguments might be produc'd, this clearly evinces it; that besides their other trifles, they have written so much and so exquisitely of Fooling. And so, who ever he were that writ of the Art of Rhetorick to Herennius, he reckons Folly as a species of wit. And Quintilian, the Soveraign of this Order, has a Chapter touching Laughter more prolixe than an Iliad. In fine, they attribute so much to Folly, that what many times cannot be clear'd with the best Arguments, is yet now and then put off with a jest: unless, perhaps you'll say, 'tis no part of Folly to provoke laughter, and that artificially.

Of the same batch also are they that hunt after immortality of Fame by setting out Books. Of whom, though all of 'em are endebted to me, yet in the first place are they that nothing but daub Paper with their empty Toyes. For they that write learnedly to the understanding of a few Scholers, and refuse not to stand the test of a Persius or Laelius, seem to me rather

to be pitied than happy, as persons that are ever tormenting themselves ; Adding, Changing, Putting in, Blotting out, Revising, Reprinting, showing 't to friends, [1] and nine years in correcting, yet never fully satisfied ; at so great a rate do they purchase this vain reward, to wit, Praise, and that too of a very few, with so many watchings, so much sweat, so much vexation and loss of sleep, the most pretious of all things. Add to this the waste of health, spoil of complexion, weakness of eyes or rather blindness, poverty, envie, abstinence from pleasure, overhasty Old-age, untimely death, and the like ; so highly does this Wise man value the approbation of one or two blear-ey'd fellows. But how much happier is this my Writer's dotage, who never studies for any thing, but puts in writing what ever he pleases or what comes first in his head, though it be but his dreams ; and all this with small waste of Paper, as well knowing that the vainer those Trifles are, the higher esteem they will have with the greater number, that is to say all the fools and unlearned. And what matter is it to sleight those few learned, if yet

[1] nonumque prematur in annum.

they ever read them? Or of what authority will the censure of so few Wise men be against so great a Cloud of Gainsayers?

But they are the wiser that put out other men's works for their own, and transfer that glory which others with great pains have obtain'd to themselves; relying on this, that they conceive, though it should so happen that their theft be never so plainly detected, that yet they should enjoy the pleasure of it for the present. And 'tis worth one's while to consider how they please themselves when they are applauded by the common people, pointed at in a Croud, [1] 'This is that excellent person'; lie on Book-sellers' stalls; and in the top of every Page have three hard words read, but chiefly Exotick, and next degree to conjuring; which, by the immortal Gods! what are they but meer words? And agen, if ye consider the world, by how few understood, and prais'd by fewer! for even amongst the unlearned there are different palates. Or what is it that their own very names are often conterfeit, or borrow'd from some Books of the Antients? When one

[1] οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ δεινὸς ἐκεῖνος.

one called Telemachus, another Stelenus, a third Laertes, a fourth Polycrates, a fifth Thrasymachus. So that there is no difference whether they title their Books with the 'Tale of a Tub,' or according to the Philosophers, by Alpha Beta.

But the most pleasant of all is to see them praise one another with Epistles, Verses, and Encomiums; Fools their fellow-Fools and Dunces their brother Dunces. This, in t'other's opinion, is an absolute Alcaeus; and the other in his, a very Callimachus. He holds Tully in nothing to t'other, and t'other again pronounces him more learned than Plato. And sometimes too they pick out their Antagonist, and think to raise themselves a Fame by writing one against t'other; while the giddy multitude are so long divided to whether of the two they shall determine the Victory, till each goes off Conqueror, and, as if he had done some great Action, fancies himself a Triumph. And now Wise Men laugh at these things as foolish, as indeed they are. Who denies it? Yet in the mean time, such is

[illegible]

my kindness to them, they live a merry life, and would not change their imaginary Felicitie, no, not with the Scipioes. While yet those Learned men, though they laugh their fill and reap the benefit of others' Folly, cannot without ingratitude deny but that even they too are not a little beholding to me themselves.

And amongst them our Advocates challenge the first place, nor is there any sort of people that please themselves like them: for while they daily roul Sisyphus his stone, and quote ye a thousand cases, as it were in a breath, no matter how little to the purpose; and heap Glosses upon Glosses, and Opinions on the neck of Opinions; they bring it at last to this pass, that that studie of all other seems the most difficult. Add to these, our Logicians and Sophisters, a generation of men [1]more prattling than an Echo, and the worst of 'em able to outchat an hundred of the best pickt Gossips. And yet their condition would be much better were they onely full of words, and not so given to scolding, that they most obstinately hack and hew one another [2]about a matter of nothing,

[1] aere Dodonaeo loquaciores. [2] de lana caprina.

and make such a sputter about Terms and Words, till they have quite lost the Sense. And yet they are so happy in the good opinion of themselves, that as soon as they are furnisht with two or three Syllogisms, they dare boldly enter the Lists against any Man upon any Point; as not doubting but to run him down with noise, though the Opponent were another Stentor.

And next these come our Philosophers, so much reverenc'd for their Fur'd Gowns and Starcht Beards, that they look upon themselves as the onely Wise Men, and all others as Shadows. And yet how pleasantly do they dote while they frame in their heads innumerable worlds; measure out the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, nay and Heaven it self, as it were with a pair of Compasses; lay down the Causes of Lightning, Winds, Eclipses, and other the like Inexplicable Matters; and all this too without the least doubting, as if they were Nature's Secretaries, or dropt down among us from the Council of the Gods; while in the mean time Nature laughs at them and all their blind conjectures. For, that they know nothing, even

this is a sufficient Argument, that they do 'nt agree amongst themselves, and are so indemonstrable as to others touching every particular. These, though they have not the least degree of knowledge, profess yet that they have master'd all; nay, though they neither know themselves, nor perceive a Ditch or Block that lies in their way, for that perhaps most of them are half blind, or their wits a wooll-gathering, yet give out that they have discovr'd Ideas, Universalities, separated Forms, first Matters, Quiddities, Ecceities, Formalities, and the like stuff; things so thin and bodiless, that I believe even Lynceus himself were not able to perceive 'em. But then chiefly do they disdain [1] the unhallow'd Croud, as often as with their Triangles, Quadrangles, Circles and the like Mathematical Devices, more confounded than a Labyrinth, and Letters dispos'd one against t' other, as it were in Battle-Array, they cast a mist before the eyes of the ignorant. Nor is there wanting of this kind some that pretend to foretell things by the Stars, and make promises of Miracles beyond all things of Southsaying, and are so

[1] prophanum vulgus.

fortunate as to meet with people that believe 'em.

But perhaps I had better pass over our Divines in silence [1] and not stir this Pool, or touch this fair but unsavoury Plant; as a kind of men that are supercilious beyond comparison, and to that too, implacable; lest setting 'em about my ears, they attaque me by Troops, and force me to a Recantation-Sermon, which if I refuse, they streight pronounce me an Heretick. For this is the Thunder-bolt with which they fright those whom they are resolv'd not to favour. And truly, though there are few others that less willingly acknowledge the kindnesses I have done them, yet even these too stand fast bound to me upon no ordinary accounts; whil'st being happy in their own Opinion, and as if they dwelt in the third Heaven, they look with Haughtiness on all others as poor creeping things, and could almost find in their hearts to pitie 'em; whilst hedg'd in with so many Magisterial Definitions, Conclusions, Corollaries, Propositions Explicit and Implicit, they abound with so many [2] start-

[1] *καὶ ταύτην Καμαρίναν μὴ κινεῖν.* [2] *κρησφυγέτοις.*

ing-holes, that Vulcan's Net cannot hold 'em so fast, but they'll slip through with their distinctions; with which they so easily cut all knots asunder that a Hatchet could not have done it better, so plentiful are they in their new-found Words and prodigious Terms. Besides, whil'st they explicate the most hidden Mysteries according to their own fancie:—as, how the World was first made; how Original Sin is deriv'd to Posterity; in what manner, how much room, and how long time, Christ lay in the Virgin's Womb; how Accidents subsist in the Eucharist without their Subject.

But these are common and threadbare; these are worthy of our great and illuminated Divines, as the world calls 'em! At these, if ever they fall a thwart 'em, they prick up:—as, whether there was any instant of time in the generation of the Second Person; whether there be more than one Filiation in Christ; whether it be a possible Proposition that God the Father hates the Son; or whether it was possible that Christ could have taken upon Him the likeness of a Woman, or of the Devil, or of an Ass, or of a Stone, or of a Gourd; and then how that

Gourd should have Preach't, wrought Miracles, or been hung on the Cross; and, what Peter had Consecrated, if he had administred the Sacrament at what time the Body of Christ hung upon the Cross; or whether at the same time he might be said to be Man; whether after the Resurrection there will be any eating and drinking, since we are so much afraid of hunger and thirst in this world. There are infinite of these [1] subtile Trifles, and others more subtile than these; of Notions, Relations, Instants, Formalities, Quiddities, Ecceities, which no one can perceive without a Lynceus his eyes, that could look through a stone-wall, and discover those things through the thickest darkness that never were.

Add to this those their other Determinations, and those too so contrary to common Opinion that those Oracles of the Stoicks, which they call Paradoxes, seem in comparison of these but blockish and idle:—as, 'tis a lesser crime to kill a thousand men than to set a stitch on a poor man's shooe on the Sabbath-day; and that a man should rather chuse that the whole world

[1] λεπτολεσχίαι.

with all Food and Raiment, as they say, should perish, than tell a lye, though never so inconsiderable. And these most subtile subtilties are rendred yet more subtile by the several Methods of so many Schoolmen, that one might sooner wind himself out of a Labyrinth than the entanglements of the Realists, Nominalists, Thomists, Albertists, Occamists, Scotists. Nor have I nam'd all the several Sects, but onely some of the chief; in all which there is so much Doctrine and so much difficultie, that I may well conceive the Apostles, had they been to deal with these new kind of Divines, had needed to have pray'd in aid of some other Spirit.

Paul knew what Faith was, and yet when he saith, 'Faith is the Substance of things hop'd for, and the Evidence of things not seen', he did not define it Doctor-like. And as he understood Charity well himself, so he did as Illogically divide and define it to others in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter the thirteenth. And devoutly, no doubt, did the Apostles consecrate the Eucharist; yet, had they been askt the question touching the 'Terminus a quo' and the 'Terminus ad quem' of Transub-

stantiation; of the manner how the same body can be in several places at one and the same time; of the difference the body of Christ has in Heaven from that of the Cross, or this in the Sacrament; in what punct of time Transubstantiation is, whereas Prayer, by means of which it is, as being a discrete quantity, is transient; they would not, I conceive, have answer'd with the same subtilty as the Scotists Dispute and Define it. They knew the Mother of Jesus; but which of them has so Philosophically demonstrated how she was preserv'd from Original sin, as have done our Divines? Peter receiv'd the Keyes, and from Him too that would not have trusted them with a person unworthy; yet whether he had understanding or no, I know not, for certainly he never attain'd to that subtilty to determine how he could have the Key of knowledge that had no knowledge himself. They Baptized far and near, and yet taught no where what was the Formal, Material, Efficient, and final cause of Baptisme; nor made the least mention of delible and indelible Characters. They worshipt, 'tis true, but in Spirit, following herein no other than that of

the Gospel, 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship, must worship him in Spirit and Truth'; yet it does not appear it was at that time reveal'd to them that an Image sketcht on the Wall with a Cole, was to be worshipt with the same worship as Christ Himself, if at least the two 'fore fingers be stretcht out, the hair long and uncut, and have three Rayes about the Crown of the Head. For who can conceive these things, unless he has spent at least six and thirty years in the Philosophical and Supercoelestial Whims of Aristotle and the Schoolmen?

In like manner, the Apostles press to us Grace; but which of them distinguisheth between [1] free grace and grace that makes a man acceptable? They exhort us to good works, and yet determine not [2] what is the work working, and what a resting in the work done. They incite us to Charity, and yet make no difference between [3] Charity infus'd and Charity wrought in us by our own endeavours. Nor do they declare whether it be an Accident or a Sub-

[1] gratiam gratis datam et gratiam gratificantem.
[2] opus operans et opus operatum.
[3] infusam et acquisitam.

stance, a thing Created or Uncreated. They detest and abominate sin, but let me not live if they could define according to Art what that is which we call Sin, unless perhaps they were inspir'd by the spirit of the Scotists. Nor can I be brought to believe that Paul, by whose learning you may judge the rest, would have so often condemn'd Questions, Disputes, Genealogies, and, as himself calls 'em, [1] 'Strifes of words', if he had throughly understood those subtilties; especially when all the Debates and Controversies of those times were rude and blockish, in comparison of the more than Chrysippean subtilties of our Masters. Although yet the Gentlemen are so modest, that if they meet with any thing written by the Apostles not so smooth and even as might be expected from a Master, they do not presently condemn it, but handsomly bend it to their own purpose; so great Respect and Honour do they give, partly to Antiquity and partly to the name of Apostle. And truly 'twere a kind of injustice to require so great things of them that never heard the least word from their Masters concern-

[1] λογομαχίας.

ing it. And so if the like happen in Chrysostome, Basil, Jerome, they think it enough to say, They are not oblig'd by 't.

The Apostles also confuted the Heathen Philosophers and Jews, a people than whom none more obstinate; but rather by their good Lives and Miracles than Syllogisms: and yet there was scarce one amongst 'em that was capable of understanding the least 'Quodlibet' of the Scotists. But now, where is that Heathen or Heretick that must not presently stoop to such Wire-drawn subtilties, unless he be so thick-skul'd that he can't apprehend 'em, or so impudent as to hiss 'em down, or, being furnisht with the same Tricks, be able to make his party good with 'em? As if a man should set a Conjurer on work against a Conjurer, or fight with one hallowed Sword against another, which would prove no other than [1]a work to no purpose. For my own part I conceive the Christians would do much better, if instead of those dull Troops and Companies of Souldiers, with which they have manag'd their War with such doubtful success, they would send the

[1] Penelopes tela.

bauling Scotists, the most obstinate Occamists, and invincible Albertists to war against the Turks and Saracens; and they would see, I guess, a most pleasant Combate, and such a Victory as was never before. For who is so faint whom their devices will not enliven? who so stupid whom such spurrs can't quicken? or who so quick-sighted, before whose eyes they can't cast a mist?

But you'l say, I jest. Nor are ye without cause, since even amongst Divines themselves there are some that have learnt better, and are ready to turn their stomacks at those foolish subtilties of t' others. There are some that detest 'em as a kind of Sacriledge, and count it the height of Impiety to speak so irreverently of such hidden things, rather to be ador'd than explicated; to dispute of 'em with such profane and Heathenish niceties; to define 'em so arrogantly, and pollute the majestie of Divinity with such pithless and sordid terms and opinions. Mean time the others please, nay hug themselves in their happiness, and are so taken up with these pleasant trifles, that they have not so much leisure as to cast the least eye on the

Gospel or S. Paul's Epistles. And while they play the fool at this rate in their Schools, they make account the Universal Church would otherwise perish, unless, as the Poets fancy'd of Atlas that he supported Heaven with his shoulders, they underpropt t' other with their Syllogistical Buttresses. And how great a happiness is this, think ye? while, as if holy Writ were a Nose of Wax, they fashion and refashion it according to their pleasure; while they require that their own Conclusions, subscrib'd by two or three Schoolmen, be accounted greater than Solon's Laws, and prefer'd before the Papal Decretals; while, as Censors of the world, they force every one to a Recantation, that differs but a hair's bredth from the least of their Explicit or Implicit Determinations. And those too they pronounce like Oracles. This Proposition is scandalous; this Irreverent; this has a smatch of Heresie; this no very good sound: so that neither Baptisme, nor the Gospel, nor Paul, nor Peter, nor St. Jerome, nor St. Augustine, no nor [1] most Aristotelitotical Thomas himself, can make a man

[1] 'Αριστοτελικώτατος ipse Thomas.

a Christian, without these Batchelours too be pleas'd to give him his grace. And the like is their subtilty in judging; for who would think he were no Christian that should say these two Speeches 'Matula Putes' and 'matula Putet', or 'Ollae fervere' and 'ollam fervere' were not both good Latine, unless their wisdomes had taught us the contrary? who had deliver'd the Church from such Mists of Errour, which yet no one e're met with, had they not come out with some University Seal for 't? And are they not most happy while they do these things?

Then for what concerns Hell, how exactly they describe every thing, as if they had been conversant in that Common-wealth most part of their time! Again, how do they frame in their fancy new Orbes, adding to those we have already an eighth! a goodly one, no doubt, and spatious enough, lest perhaps their happy Souls might lack room to walk in, entertain their friends, and now and then play at Foot-ball. And with these and a thousand the like fopperies their heads are so full stufft and stretcht, that I believe Jupiter's brain was not near so bigg when, being in labour with Pallas, he was

beholding to the Midwifery of Vulcan's Axe. And therefore ye must not wonder if in their publique Disputes they are so bound about the head, lest otherwise perhaps their brains might leap out. Nay, I have sometimes laught my self, to see 'em so towre in their own opinion when they speak most barbarously; and when they Humh and Hawh so pitifully that none but one of their own Tribe can understand 'em, they call it heights which the Vulgar can't reach; for they say 'tis beneath the dignity of Divine Mysteries to be crampt and ty'd up to the narrow Rules of Grammarians: from whence we may conjecture the great Prerogative of Divines, if they onely have the priviledge of speaking corruptly, in which yet every Cobler thinks himself concern'd for his share. Lastly, they look upon themselves as somewhat more than Men, as often as they are devoutly saluted by the name of 'Our Masters', in which they fancy there lyes as much as in the Jews' [1]'Jehovah'; and therefore they reckon it a crime if 'Magister noster' be written other than in Capital Letters; and if any one should preposterously say 'Noster

[1] τετραγράμματον.

magister', he has at once overturn'd the whole body of Divinity.

And next these come those that commonly call themselves the Religious and Monks; most false in both Titles, when both a great part of 'em are farthest from Religion, and no men swarm thicker in all places than themselves. Nor can I think of any thing that could be more miserable, did not I support 'em so many several wayes. For whereas all men detest 'em to that height, that they take it for ill luck to meet one of 'em by chance, yet such is their happiness that they flatter themselves. For first, they reckon it one of the main Points of Piety if they are so illiterate that they can't so much as read. And then when they run over their Offices, which they carry about 'em, rather by tale than understanding, they believe the Gods more than ordinarily pleas'd with their braying. And some there are among 'em that put off their trumperies at vast rates, yet roave up and down for the bread they eat; nay, there is scarce an Inne, Waggon, or Ship into which they intrude not, to the no small damage of the Common-wealth of Beggars. And yet, like pleasant fellows, with

all this Vileness, Ignorance, Rudeness and Impudence, they represent to us, for so they call it, the lives of the Apostles. Yet what is more pleasant than that they do all things by Rule and, as it were, a kind of Mathematicks, the least swerving from which were a crime beyond forgiveness :—as, how many knots their shooes must be ti'd with, of what colour every thing is, what distinction of habits, of what stuffe made, how many straws broad their Girdles and of what fashion, how many bushels wide their Cowle, how many fingers long their Hair, and how many hours sleep ; which exact equality, how disproportionable it is, among such variety of bodies and tempers, who is there that does not perceive it ? And yet by reason of these fooleries they not onely set slight by others, but each different Order, men otherwise professing Apostolical Charity, despise one another, and for the different wearing of a habit, or that 'tis of darker colour, they put all things in combustion. And amongst these there are some so rigidly Religious that their upper Garment is hair-Cloth, their inner of the finest Linnen ; and, on the contrary, others wear

Linnen without, and hair next their skins. Others, agen, are as affraid to touch mony as poyson, and yet neither forbear Wine nor dallying with Women. In a word, 'tis their onely care that none of 'em come near one another in their manner of living, nor do they endeavour how they may be like Christ, but how they may differ among themselves.

And another great happiness they conceive in their Names, while they call themselves Cordiliers, and among these too, some are Colletes, some Minors, some Minims, some Crossed; and agen, these are Benedictines, those Bernardines; these Carmelites, those Augustines; these Williamites, and those Jacobines; as if it were not worth the while to be call'd Christians. And of these, a great part build so much on their Ceremonies and petty Traditions of Men, that they think one Heaven is too poor a reward for so great merit; little dreaming that the time will come when Christ, not regarding any of these trifles, will call 'em to account for His precept of Charity. One shall shew ye a large Trough full of all kinds of Fish; another tumble ye out so many bushels of Prayers;

another reckon ye so many myriads of Fasts, and fetch 'em up agen in one dinner by eating till he cracks agen; another produces more bundles of Ceremonies than seven of the stoutest Ships would be able to carry; another brags he has not toucht a penny these three score Years without two pair of Gloves at least upon his hands; another wears a Cowl so lin'd with grease that the poorest Tarpaulin would not stoop to take it up; another will tell ye he has liv'd these fifty five Years like a Spunge, continually fastned to the same place; another is grown hoarse with his daily chanting; another has contracted a Lethargy by his solitary living; and another the Palsie in his Tongue for want of speaking. But Christ, interrupting them in their vanities, which otherwise were endless, will ask 'em, 'Whence this new kind of Jews? I acknowledge one Commandment, which is truly mine, of which alone I hear nothing. I promist, 'tis true, my Father's heritage, and that without Parables, not to Cowls, odd Prayers, and Fastings, but to the duties of Faith and Charity. Nor can I acknowledge them that least acknowledg their faults. They that would

seem holier than my self, let 'em if they list possess to [1] themselves those three hundred sixty five Heavens of Basilides the Heretick's invention, or command them whose foolish Traditions they have prefer'd before my Preceps, to erect them a new one'. When they shall hear these things, and see common ordinary persons preferr'd before 'em, with what countenance, think ye, will they behold one another? In the mean time they are happy in their hopes, and for this also they are beholding to me.

And yet these kind of people, though they are as it were of another Common-wealth, no man dares despise; especially those begging Friars, because they are privie to all men's secrets by means of Confessions, as they call 'em. Which yet were no less than treason to discover, unless, being got drunk, they have a mind to be pleasant, and then all comes out, that is to say by hints and conjectures, but suppressing the names. But if any one should anger these Wasps, they'll sufficiently revenge themselves in their publique Sermons, and so point out their enemy by

[1] Abraxasiorum coelos.

circumlocutions that there's no one but understands whom 'tis they mean, unless he understand nothing at all; nor will they give over their barking [1] till you throw the Dogs a bone. And now tell me, what Jugler or Mountebank you had rather behold than hear them rhetorically play the fool in their Preachments, and yet most sweetly imitating what Rhetoricians have written touching the Art of good speaking? Good God! what several postures they have! How they shift their voice, sing out their words, skip up and down, and are ever and anon making such new faces, that they confound all things with noise! and yet this Knack of theirs is no less than a Mystery that runs in succession from one brother to another; which though it be not lawful for me to know, however I'll venture at it by conjectures. And first they invoke what ever they have scrapt from the Poets; and in the next place, if they are to discourse of Charity, they take their rise from the river Nilus; or to set out the Mystery of the Cross, from Bell and the Dragon; or to dispute of Fasting, from the twelve signs of the Zodiack;

[1] quam in os offam objeceris.

or, being to preach of Faith, ground their matter on the square of a Circle.

I have heard my self one, and he no small fool, —I was mistaken, I would have said Scholar,— that being in a Famous Assembly explaining the Mystery of the Trinity, that he might both let 'em see his Learning was not ordinary, and withal satisfie some Theological ears, he took a new way, to wit from the Letters, Syllables, and the Word it self; then from the Cohærence of the Nominative Case and the Verb, and the Adjective and Substantive: and while most of the Auditory wonder'd, and some of 'em mutter'd that of Horace, [1] 'what does all this Trumpery drive at?' at last he brought the matter to this head, that he would demonstrate that the Mystery of the Trinity was so clearly exprest in the very Rudiments of Grammar, that the best Mathematician could not chalk 't out more plainly. And in this Discourse did [2] this most Superlative Theologue beat his brains for eight whole moneths, that at this hour he's as blind as a Beetle, to wit, all the sight of his eyes being run into the sharpness of his wit. But

[1] Quorsum haec tam putida tendunt? [2] *θεολογώτατος* ille.

for all that he nothing forthinketh his blindness, rather taking the same for too cheap a price of such a glory as he wan thereby.

And besides him I met with another, some eighty years of age, and such a Divine that you'd have sworn Scotus himself was reviv'd in him. He, being upon the point of unfolding the Mystery of the name Jesus, did with wonderful subtilty demonstrate that there lay hidden in those Letters what ever could be said of him; for that it was only declin'd with three Cases, he said, it was a manifest token of the Divine Trinity; and then, that the first ended in S, the second in M, the third in U, there was in it [1]an ineffable Mystery, to wit, those three Letters declaring to us that he was [2]the Beginning, Middle, and End of all. Nay, the Mystery was yet more abstruse; for he so Mathematically split the word Jesus into two equal parts, that he left the middle letter by it self, and then told us that that letter in Hebrew was (ש) *Schin* or *Sin*, and that *Sin* in the Scotch tongue, as he remember'd, signifi'd as much as Sin; from

[1] ἄῤῥητον. [2] summum, medium et ultimum.

whence he gather'd that it was Jesus that took away the sins of the world. At which new Exposition the Auditory were so wonderfully intent and struck with admiration, especially the Theologues, that there wanted little but that Niobe-like they had been turn'd to stones; whereas the like had almost happen'd to me, as befell the Priapus in Horace. And not without cause, for when were the Grecian Demosthenes or Roman Cicero e're guilty of the like? They thought that Introduction faulty that was wide of the Matter, as if it were not the way of Carters and Swinheards, that have no more wit than God sent 'em. But these learned men think their Preamble, for so they call it, then chiefly Rhetorical when it has least Coherence with the rest of the Argument, that the admiring Auditory may in the mean while whisper to themselves, [1] 'What will he be at now'? In the third place, they bring in instead of Narration some Texts of Scripture, but handle 'em cursorily, and as it were by the bye, when yet it is the onely thing they should have insisted on. And fourthly, as it were changing a Part

[1] Quo nunc se proripit ille?

in the Play, they bolt out with some question in Divinity, and many times [1] relating neither to Earth nor Heaven, and this they look upon as a piece of Art. Here they erect their Theological Crests, and beat into the people's ears those Magnifical Titles of Illustrious Doctors, Subtile Doctors, most Subtile Doctors, Seraphick Doctors, Cherubin-Doctors, Holy Doctors, Unquestionable Doctors, and the like; and then throw abroad among the ignorant people Syllogisms, Majors, Minors, Conclusions, Corollaries, Suppositions, and those so weak and foolish that they are below Pedantry. There remaines yet the fifth Act, in which one would think they should shew their Mastery. And here they bring in some foolish insipid Fable out of *Speculum Historiale* or *Gesta Romanorum*, and Expound it Allegorically, Tropologically, and Anagogically. And after this manner do they end their Chimæra, and such as Horace despair'd of compassing, when he writ 'Humano capiti,' &c.

But they have heard from some body, I know not whom, that the beginning of a Speech

[1] *οὔτε γῆς οὔτε οὐρανοῦ ἀπτομένην.*

should be Sober and Grave, and least given to noise. And therefore they begin theirs at that rate they can scarce hear themselves, as if it were no matter whether any one understood 'em. They have learnt some where that to move the affections a lowder voice is requisite. Whereupon they that otherwise would speak like a Mouse in a Cheese, start out of a suddain into a downright fury, even there too, where there's the least need of it. A man would swear they were past the power of Hellebor, so little do they consider where 'tis they run out. Again, because they have heard that as a Speech comes up to something, a man should press it more earnestly, they, how ever they begin, use a strange contention of voice in every part, though the Matter it self be never so flat, and end in that manner as if they'd run themselves out of breath. Lastly, they have learnt that among Rhetoricians there is some mention of Laughter, and therefore they study to prick in a jest here and there; but, O Venus! so void of wit and so little to the purpose, that it may be truly call'd [1] an Asses playing on the Harp. And sometimes

[1] Ὄνον πρὸς τὴν λύραν.

also they use somewhat of a sting, but so nevertheless that they rather tickle than wound ; nor do they ever more truly flatter than when they would seem [1] to use the greatest freedom of speech. Lastly, such is their whole action that a man would swear they had learnt it from our common Tumblers, though yet they come short of 'em in every respect. However, they are both so like, that no man will dispute but that either these learnt their Rhetorick from them, or they theirs from these. And yet they light on some that, when they hear 'em, conceive they hear very Demosthenes and Ciceroes : of which sort chiefly are our Merchants and Women, whose Ears onely they endeavour to please, because as to the first, if they stroake 'em handsomely, some part or other of their ill-gotten goods is wont to fall to their share. And the Women, though for many other things they favour this Order, this is not the least, that they commit to their breasts what ever discontents they have against their Husbands. And now, I conceive me, ye see how much this kind of people are beholding to me, that with their Petty Ceremonies,

[1] παῤῥησιάζεσθαι.

Ridiculous Trifles, and Noise, exercise a kind of Tyranny among mankind, believing themselves very Pauls and Anthonies.

But I willingly give over these Stage-players, that are such ingrateful dissemblers of the courtesies I have done 'em, and such impudent pretenders to Religion which they ha' n't. And now I have a mind to give some small touches of Princes and Courts, of whom I am had in reverence, above-board and, as it becomes Gentlemen, frankly. And truly, if they had the least proportion of sound judgment, what life were more unpleasant than theirs, or so much to be avoided ? For who ever did but truly weigh with himself how great a burthen lies upon his shoulders that would truly discharge the duty of a Prince, he would not think it worth his while to make his way to a Crown by Perjury and Parricide. He would consider that he that takes a Scepter in his hand should manage the Publick, not his Private Interest ; study nothing but the common good ; and not in the least go contrary to those Laws whereof himself is both the Author and Exactor : that he is to take an account of the good or evil administra-

tion of all his magistrates and subordinate Officers; that, though he is but one, all men's Eyes are upon him, and in his power it is, either like a good Planet to give life and safety to mankind by his harmless influence, or like a fatal Comet to send mischief and destruction: that the vices of other men are not alike felt, nor so generally communicated; and that a Prince stands in that place that his least deviation from the Rule of Honesty and Honour reaches farther than himself, and opens a gap to many men's ruine. Besides, that the fortune of Princes has many things attending it that are but too apt to train 'em out of the way, as Pleasure, Liberty, Flattery, Excess; for which cause he should the more diligently endeavour and set a watch o're himself, lest perhaps he be led aside and fail in his duty. Lastly, to say nothing of Treasons, ill will and such other Mischiefs he's in jeopardy of, that that True King is over his head, who in a short time will cal him to account for every the least trespass, and that so much the more severely, by how much more mighty was the Empire committed to his charge. These and the like if a Prince

should duly weigh, and weigh it he would if he were wise, he would neither be able to sleep nor take any hearty repast.

But now by my courtesie they leave all this care to the Gods, and are onely taken up with themselves, not admitting any one to their eare but such as know how to speak pleasant things, and not trouble 'em with business. They believe they have discharg'd all the duty of a Prince if they Hunt every day, keep a Stable of fine Horses, sell Dignities and Commanderies, and invent new wayes of draining the Citizens' Purses and bringing it into their own Exchequer ; but under such dainty new-found names, that though the thing be most injust in it self, it carries yet some face of equity ; adding to this some little sweetnings, that what ever happens, they may be secure of the common people. And now suppose some one, such as they sometimes are, a man ignorant of Laws, little less than an enemy to the publique good, and minding nothing but his own, given up to Pleasure, a hater of Learning, Liberty, and Justice, studying nothing less than the publique safety, but measuring every thing by his own will and profit ; and then put on

him a golden Chain, that declares the accord of all Vertues linkt one to another; a Crown set with Diamonds, that should put him in mind how he ought to excell all others in Heroick Vertues; besides a Scepter, the Emblem of Justice and an untainted heart; and lastly, a Purple Robe, a Badge of that Charity he owes the Common-wealth. All which if a Prince should compare 'em with his own life, he would I believe be clearly asham'd of his bravery, and be afraid lest some or other gibing Expounder turn all this Tragical Furniture into a ridiculous Laughing-stock.

And as to the Court-Lords, what should I mention them? than most of whom though there be nothing more indebted, more servile, more witless, more contemptible, yet they would seem as they were the most excellent of all others. And yet in this only thing no men more modest, in that they are contented to wear about 'em Gold, Jewels, Purple, and those other marks of Vertue and Wisdome, but for the study of the things themselves, they remit it to others; thinking it happiness enough for them that they can call the King Master, have learnt the cringe

à la mode, know when and where to use those Titles of Your Grace, My Lord, Your Magnificence; in a word that they are past all shame and can flatter pleasantly. For these are the Arts that speak a man truly Noble and an exact Courtier. But if ye look into their manner of life you'll find 'em meer Sots, [1] as debaucht as Penelope's Wooers; you know the other part of the verse, which the Echo will better tell ye than I can. They sleep till noon, and have their mercenary Levite come to their bed side, where he chops over his Mattins before they are half up. Then to Break-fast, which is scarce done but Dinner staies for 'em. From thence they go to Dice, Tables, Cards, or entertain themselves with Jesters, Fools, Gambolls, and Horse-tricks. In the mean time they have one or two Bevers, and then Supper, and after that a Banquet, and 'twere well, by Jupiter, there were no more than one. And in this manner do their Hours, Dayes, Moneths, Years, Age slide away without the least irksomeness. Nay, I have sometimes gone away many Inches fatter, to see 'em [2] speak bigg words; whiles each of the Ladies

[1] sponsos Penelopes, &c.

[2] *μεγαλορρούντας.*

believes her self so much nearer to the Gods, by how much the longer train she trails after her; whiles one Nobleman edges out another, that he may get the nearer to Jupiter himself; and every one of 'em pleases himself the more by how massier is the Chain he swaggs on his shoulders, as if he meant to shew his strength as well as his wealth.

Nor are Princes by themselves in their manner of life, since Popes, Cardinals, and Bishops have so diligently follow'd their steps, that they've almost got the start of 'em. For if any of 'em would consider what their Albe should put 'em in mind of, to wit a blameless life; what is meant by their forked Miters, whose each point is held in by the same knot, wee'll suppose it a perfect knowledge of the Old and New Testaments; what those Gloves on their Hands, but a sincere administration of the Sacraments, and free from all touch of worldly business; what their Crosier, but a careful looking after the Flock committed to their charge; what the Cross born before 'em, but victory over all earthly affections:—these, I say, and many of the like kind should any one

truly consider, would he not live a sad and troublesome life? Whereas now they do well enough while they feed themselves onely; and for the care of their Flock, either put it over to Christ or lay it all on their Suffragans, as they call 'em, or some poor Vicars. Nor do they so much as remember their name, or what the word Bishop signifies; to wit, Labour, Care and Trouble. But in racking to gather moneys they truly act the part of Bishops, [1] and herein acquit themselves to be no blind Seers.

In like manner Cardinals, if they thought themselves the successours of the Apostles, they would likewise imagine that the same things the other did are requir'd of them, and that they are not Lords, but Dispensers of Spiritual things, of which they must shortly give an exact account. But if they also would a little Philosophize on their Habit, and think with themselves what's the meaning of their Linen Rochet; is it not a remarkable and singular integrity of life? what that inner Purple; is it not an earnest and fervent love of God? or what that outward, whose loose Plaits and

[1] *οὐδ' ἀλαοσκοπιή.*

long Train fall round his Reverence's Mule, and are large enough to cover a Camel; is it not Charity, that spreads it self so wide to the succour of all men? that is, to Instruct, Exhort, Comfort, Reprehend, Admonish, compose Wars, resist wicked Princes, and willingly expend, not onely their Wealth but their very Lives for the Flock of Christ: though yet what need at all of wealth to them that supply the room of the poor Apostles?—These things, I say, did they but duely consider, they would not be so ambitious of that Dignity; or, if they were, they would willingly leave it and live a laborious, careful life, such as was that of the antient Apostles.

And for Popes, that supply the place of Christ, if they should endeavour to imitate His Life, to wit His Poverty, Labour, Doctrine, Cross, and contempt of Life, or should they consider what the name Pope, that is Father, or Holiness, imports, who would live more disconsolate than themselves? or who would purchase that Chair with all his substance? or defend it so purchast, with Swords, Poisons, and all force imaginable? so great a profit would the access of Wisdom

deprive him of ;—Wisdom did I say ? nay, the least corn of that Salt which Christ speaks of : so much Wealth, so much Honour, so much Riches, so many Victories, so many Offices, so many Dispensations, so much Tribute, so many Pardons ; such Horses, such Mules, such Guards, and so much Pleasure would it lose them. You see how much I have comprehended in a little : instead of which it would bring in Watchings, Fastings, Tears, Prayers, Sermons, good Endeavours, Sighs, and a thousand the like troublesome Exercises. Nor is this least considerable : so many Scribes, so many Copying Clerks, so many Notaries, so many Advocates, so many Promooters, so many Secretaries, so many Muletters, so many Grooms, so many Bankers : in short, that vast multitude of men that overcharge the Roman See—I mistook, I meant honour—, might beg their bread.

A most inhumane and abominable thing, and more to be execrated, that those great Princes of the Church and true Lights of the World should be reduc'd to a Staff and a Wallet. Whereas now, if there be any thing that requires their pains, they leave that to Peter and Paul

that have leisure enough; but if there be any thing of Honour or Pleasure, they take that to themselves. By which means it is, yet by my courtesie, that scarce any kind of men live more voluptuously or with less trouble; as believing that Christ will be well enough pleas'd, if in their Mystical and almost mimical Pontificalibus, Ceremonies, Titles of Holiness and the like, and Blessing and Cursing, they play the parts of Bishops. To work Miracles is old and antiquated, and not in fashion now; to instruct the people, troublesome; to interpret the Scripture, Pedantick; to pray, a sign one has little else to do; to shed tears, silly and womanish; to be poor, base; to be vanquisht, dishonourable, and little becoming him that scarce admits even Kings to kiss his Slipper; and lastly, to dye, uncouth; and to be stretcht on a Cross, infamous.

Theirs are only those Weapons and sweet Blessings which Paul mentions, and of these truly they are bountiful enough: as Interdictions, Hangings, Heavy Burthens, Reproofs, Anathemas, Executions in Effigie, and that terrible Thunder-bolt of Excommunication, with

the very sight of which they sink men's Souls beneath the bottom of Hell: which yet these most holy Fathers in Christ and his Vicars hurl with more fierceness against none than against such as, by the instigation of the Devil, attempt to lessen or rob 'em of Peter's Patrimony. When, though those words in the Gospel, 'We have left all, and follow'd Thee,' were his, yet they call his Patrimony Lands, Cities, Tribute, imposts, Riches; for which, being enflam'd with the love of Christ, they contend with Fire and Sword, and not without losse of much Christian blood, and believe they have then most Apostolically defended the Church, the Spouse of Christ, when the enemy, as they call 'em, are valiantly routed. As if the Church had any deadlier enemies than wicked Prelates, who not onely suffer Christ to run out of request for want of preaching him, but hinder his spreading by their multitudes of Laws, meerly contriv'd for their own profit, corrupt him by their forc'd Expositions, and murder him by the evil example of their pestilent life.

Nay, further, whereas the Church of Christ was founded in blood, confirm'd by blood, and

augmented by blood, now, as if Christ, who after his wonted manner defends his people, were lost, they govern all by the Sword. And whereas War is so Savage a thing that it rather befits Beasts than Men, so outragious that the very Poets feign'd it came from the Furies, so pestilent that it corrupts all men's manners, so injust that it is best executed by the worst of men, so wicked that it has no agreement with Christ; and yet, omitting all the other, they make this their onely business. Here you'll see decrepit old fellows acting the parts of young men, neither troubled at their costs nor weari'd with their labours, nor discourag'd at any thing, so they may have the liberty of turning Laws, Religion, Peace and all things else quite topsie turvie. Nor are they destitute of their learned Flatterers that call that palpable Madness Zeal, Piety, and Valour, having found out a new way by which a man may kill his brother without the least breach of that Charity which, by the command of Christ, one Christian owes another. And here, in troth, I'm a little at a stand whether the Ecclesiastical German Electors gave 'em this example, or rather took

it from 'em; who, laying aside their Habit, Benedictions and all the like Ceremonies, so act the part of Commanders that they think it a mean thing, and least beseeming a Bishop, to shew the least courage to God-ward unless it be in a battle.

And as to the common Heard of Priests, they account it a crime to degenerate from the Sanctity of their Prelates. Heidah! how Souldier-like they bussle about the *jus divinum* of Titles, and how quick-sighted they are to pick the least thing out of the Writings of the Antients, wherewith they may fright the common people, and convince 'em, if possible, that more than a Tenth is due! Yet in the mean-time it least comes in their heads how many things are every where extant concerning that duty which they owe the people. Nor does their shorn Crown in the least admonish 'em that a Priest should be free from all worldly desires, and think of nothing but heavenly things. Whereas on the contrary, these jolly fellows say they have sufficiently discharg'd their Office if they but any-how mumble over a few odd Prayers, which, so help me, Hercules! I wonder

if any God either hear or understand, since they do neither themselves; especially when they thunder 'em out in that manner they are wont. But this they have in common with those of the Heathens, that they are vigilant enough to the harvest of their profit, nor is there any of 'em that is not better read in those Laws than the Scripture. Whereas if there be any thing burthensome, they prudently lay that on other men's shoulders, and shift it from one to t'other, as men toss a Ball from hand to hand; following herein the example of Lay Princes, who commit the Government of their Kingdoms to their Grand Ministers, and they again to others, and leave all study of Piety to the common people. In like manner the common people put it over to those they call Ecclesiasticks, as if themselves were no part of the Church, or that their vow in Baptism had lost its obligation. Again, the Priests that call themselves Secular, as if they were initiated to the world, not to Christ, lay the burthen on the Regulars; the Regulars on the Monks; the Monks that have more liberty, on those that have less; and all of 'em on the Mendicants; the Mendicants on the

Carthusians, amongst whom, if any where, this Piety lies buried, but yet so close that scarce any one can perceive it. In like manner the Popes, the most diligent of all others in gathering in the Harvest of mony, refer all their Apostolical work to the Bishops ; the Bishops to the Parsons ; the Parsons to the Vicars ; the Vicars to their brother Mendicants ; and they again throw back the care of the Flock on those that take the Wooll.

But it is not my business to sift too narrowly the lives of Prelates and Priests, for fear I seem to have intended rather a Satyr than an Oration, and be thought to tax good Princes while I praise the bad. And therefore, what I slightly taught before, has been to no other end but that it might appear that there's no man can live pleasant unless he be initiated to my Rites, and have me propitious to him. For how can it be otherwise, when Fortune, the great Directress of all Humane Affairs, and my self are so all one that she was always an enemy to those wise men, and on the contrary so favourable to Fools and careless fellows, that all things hit luckly to 'em ?

You have heard of that Timotheus, the most fortunate General of the Athenians, of whom came that Proverb, [1]'His Net caught fish, though he were asleep'; and that, [2]'The Owl flies'; whereas these other hit properly, Wise men [3]'born in the fourth moneth'; and again, [4]'He rides Sejanus's his horse'; and [5]'gold of Tolouse', signifying thereby the extremity of ill fortune. But I forbear [6]the further threading of Proverbs, lest I seem to have pilfer'd my friend Erasmus's Adagies. Fortune loves those that have least wit and most confidence, and such as like that saying of Caesar, [7]'The Dye is thrown'. But Wisdome makes men bashful, which is the reason that those Wise men have so little to do, unless it be with Poverty, Hunger, and Chimny-corners; that they live such neglected, unknown and hated lives: whereas Fools abound in money, have the chief Commands in the Commonwealth, and in a word, flourish every way. For if it be a happiness [8]to please Princes, and to be

[1] Ἡ εὔδοντος κύρτος αἱρεῖ.
[2] Γλαῦξ ἵπταται.
[3] ἐν τετράδι γεννηθέντες.
[4] Equum habet Sejanum.
[5] Aurum Tolosanum.
[6] παροιμιάζεσθαι.
[7] Jacta est alea.
[8] Principibus placuisse viris.

conversant among those Golden and Diamond Gods, what is more unprofitable than Wisdom, or what is it these kind of men have, may more justly be censur'd? If Wealth is to be got, how little good at it is that Merchant like to do, if following the Precepts of Wisdom he should boggle at Perjury; or being taken in a lie, blush; or in the least regard the sad scruples of those Wise-men touching Rapine and Usury. Again, if a man sue for Honours or Church-Preferments, an Ass or wild Oxe shall sooner get 'em than a Wise man. If a man's in love with a young Wench, none of the least Humors in this Comedy, they are wholly addicted to Fools, and are afraid of a Wise man, and flie him as they would a Scorpion. Lastly, whoever intend to live merry and frolique, shut their doors against Wise men, and admit any thing sooner. In brief, go whither ye will, among Prelates, Princes, Judges, Magistrates, Friends, Enemies, from highest to lowest, and you'll find all things done by money; which, as a Wise man contemns it, so it takes a special care not to come near him. What shall I say? There is no measure or end of my praises, and yet 'tis fit my Oration

have an end. And therefore I'll ev'n break off; and yet, before I do it, 'twill not be amiss if I briefly shew ye that there has not been wanting even great Authours that have made me famous, both by their Writings and Actions, lest perhaps otherwise I may seem to have foolishly pleas'd my self only, or that the Lawyers charge me that I have prov'd nothing. After their example, therefore, will I alleadge my proofs, that is to say, [1] nothing to the point.

And first, every man allows this Proverb, 'That where a man wants matter, he may best frame some'. And to this purpose is that Verse which we teach Children, [2] ''Tis the greatest wisdome to know when and where to counterfeit the Fool'. And now judge your selves what an excellent thing this Folly is, whose very counterfeit and semblance only has got such praise from the Learned. But more candidly does that fat plump [3] 'Epicurean bacon-hogg', Horace, for so he calls himself, bid us [4] 'mingle our purposes with Folly'; and whereas he adds the word *brevem*,

[1] Οὐδὲν πρὸς ἔπος.
[2] Stultitiam simulare loco prudentia summa est.
[3] Epicuri de grege porcus. [4] Misce stultitiam consiliis.

short, perhaps to help out the Verse, he might as well have let it alone; and agen, [1] 'tis a pleasant thing to play the fool in the right season'; and in another place, he had rather [2] 'be accounted a dottrel and sot, than to be wise and made mouths at'. And Telemachus in Homer, whom the Poet praises so much, is now and then called *νήπιος*, Fool: and by the same name, as if there were some good fortune in 't, are the Tragedians wont to call Boyes and Striplings. And what does that sacred book of Iliads contain, but a kind of counter-scuffle between foolish Kings and foolish People? Besides, how absolute is that praise that Cicero gives of it! [3] 'All things are full of fools'. For who does not know that every good, the more diffusive it is, by so much the better it is?

But perhaps their authority may be of small credit among Christians. Wee'l therefore, if you please, support our praises with some Testimonies of holy Writ also; in the first place, neverthelesse, having forespoke our Theologues

[1] Dulce est desipere in loco.
[2] Delirus inersque videri, . . . Quam sapere et ringi.
[3] Stultorum plena sunt omnia.

that they'll give us leave to do it without offence. And in the next, forasmuch as we attempt a matter of some difficulty, and it may be perhaps a little too sawcy to call back agen the Muses from Helicon to so great a journey, especially in a matter they are wholly strangers to; it will be more sutable, perhaps, while I play the Divine and make my way through such prickly quiddities, that I entreat the Soul of Scotus, a thing more bristlely than either Porcupine or Hedg-hog, to leave his Scorbone a while and come into my brest, and then let him go whither he pleases, [1] or to the dogs. I could wish also that I might change my countenance, or that I had on the square Cap and the Cassock, for fear some or other should impeach me of theft, as if I had privily rifled our Masters' Desks, in that I have got so much Divinity. But it ought not to seem so strange, if after so long and intimate an acquaintance and converse with 'em, I have pickt up somewhat; when as that Fig-tree-god Priapus, hearing his owner read certain Greek words, took so much notice of 'em, that he got 'em by heart; and that Cock in

[1] vel *ἐς κόρακας.*

Lucian, by having liv'd long amongst men, became at last a master of their Language.

But to the point [1] under a fortunate direction. Ecclesiastes saith in his first Chapter, [2] 'The number of fools is infinite'; and when he calls it infinite, does he not seem to comprehend all men, unlesse it be some few, whom yet 'tis a question whether any man ever saw? But more ingenuously does Jeremiah in his tenth Chapter confess it, saying, [3] 'Every man is made a fool through his own wisdome'; attributing wisedom to God alone, and leaving folly to all men else: and agen, [4] 'Let not man glory in his wisdome'. And why, good Jeremiah, would'st thou not have a man glory in his wisedom? Because, he'll say, he has none at all. But to return to Ecclesiastes, who, when he cries out, 'Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity!' what other thoughts had he, do ye believe, than that, as I said before, the life of man is nothing else but an enterlude of Folly? In which [5] he has added one voice more to that justly receiv'd praise of Cicero's, which

[1] bonis avibus.
[2] Stultorum infinitus numerus.
[3] Stultus omnis, &c.
[4] Nec glorietur homo, &c.
[5] Album addidit calculum.

I quoted before, viz. 'All things are full of fools'. Agen, that wise Preacher that said, 'A fool changes as the Moon, but a wise man is permanent as the Sun', what else did he hint at in it, but that all mankind are fools, and the name of Wise onely proper to God? -For by the Moon Interpreters understand humane Nature, and by the Sun, God, the only Fountain of light; with which agrees that which Christ himself in the Gospel denies, that any one is to be call'd good but one, and that is God. And then if he is a fool that is not wise, and every good man according to the Stoicks is a wise man, it is no wonder if all mankind be concluded under Folly. Again Solomon, Chap. 15, 'Foolishnesse' saith he, 'is joy to the Fool', thereby plainly confessing that without folly there is no pleasure in life. To which is pertinent that other, [1] 'He that encreaseth knowledge, encreaseth grief; and in much understanding there is much indignation'. And does he not plainly confess as much, Chap. 7, 'The heart of the wise is where sadness is, but the heart of fools follows mirth'? by

[1] Quis apponit scientiam, &c.

which you see, he thought it not enough to have learnt wisedome, without he had added the knowledge of me also. And if ye will not believe me, take his own words, Chap. 1,[1] 'I gave my heart to know wisdome and knowledge, madnesse and folly'. Where, by the way, 'tis worth your remark, that he intended me somewhat extraordinary, that he nam'd me last. A Preacher writ it, and this you know is the order among Church-men, that he that is first in Dignity comes last in place, as mindful no doubt, what ever they do in other things, herein at least to observe the Evangelical precept.

Besides, that Folly is more excellent than Wisdom, the Son of Sirach, who ever he were, clearly witnesseth, Chap. 44, whose words, so help me Hercules! I shall not once utter before you meet [2]my Induction with a sutable answer, according to the manner of those in Plato that dispute with Socrates. What things are more proper to be laid up with care, such as are rare and precious, or such as are common and of no account? Why do you give me no

[1] Dedi cor meum, &c.

[2] εἰσαγωγὴν meam.

answer? Well, though ye should dissemble, the Greek Proverb will answer for ye, [1] 'Fowl Water is thrown out of doors'; which, if any man shall be so ungratious as to contemn, let him know 'tis Aristotle's, the god of our Masters'. Is there any of ye so very a Fool as to leave Jewels and Gold in the street? In troth, I think not; in the most secret part of your Houses; nor is that enough, if there be any Drawer in your Iron Chests more private than other, there ye lay 'em; but dirt ye throw out of doors. And therefore, if ye so carefully lay up such things as you value, and throw away what's vile and of no worth, is it not plain that Wisdom, which he forbids a man to hide, is of less account than Folly, which he commands him to cover? Take his own words, 'Better is the man that hideth his Folly than he that hideth his Wisdom'. Or what is that, when he attributes an upright mind without Craft or Malice to a Fool, when a wise man the while thinks no man like himself? For so I understand that in his Tenth Chap., [2] 'A Fool walking by the way, being a fool himself,

[1] *ἐπὶ θύραις ὑδρίαν.* [2] In via stultus, &c.

supposes all men to be fools like him'. And is it not a signe of great integrity to esteem every man as good as himself, and when there is no one that leans not too much to 'ther way, to be so frank yet as to divide his praises with another? Nor was this great King asham'd of the Name, when he says of himself that he is more foolish than any man. Nor did Paul, that great Doctor of the Gentiles, writing to the Corinthians, unwillingly acknowledg it; 'I speak' saith he, 'like a fool. I am more.' As if it could be any dishonour to excel in Folly.

But here I meet with a great noise of some that endeavour [1] to peck out the Crows' eyes; that is, to blind the Doctors of our times, and smoak out their eyes with new Annotations; among whom my friend Erasmus, whom for honour's sake I often mention, deserves, [2] if not the first place, yet certainly the second. O most foolish instance, they cry, and well becoming Folly her self! The Apostle's meaning was wide enough from what thou dream'st; for he spake it not in this sense, that he would have them believe him a greater fool than the rest: but when he

[1] Cornicum oculos configere. [2] si non Alpha, certe Beta.

had said, 'They are Ministers of Christ, the same am I', and by way of boasting herein, had equal'd himself with to 'thers, he added this by way of correction or checking himself, 'I am more'; as meaning that he was not onely equal to the rest of the Apostles in the work of the Gospel, but somewhat superiour. And therefore, while he would have this receiv'd as a Truth, lest nevertheless it might not relish their eares as being spoken with too much Arrogance, he foreshorten'd his Argument with the Vizard of Folly, 'I speak like a fool'; because he knew it was the Prerogative of fools to speak what they list, and that too without offence. Whatever he thought when he writ this, I leave it to them to discuss; for my own part, I follow those fat, fleshie, and vulgarly approv'd Doctours, with whom [1] by Jupiter! a great part of the learned had rather err than follow them that understand the Tongues, though they are never so much in the right. Not any of 'em make greater account of [2] those smatterers at Greek than if they were Dawes. Especially when a no small Professor, whose name I wittingly conceal,

[1] *νὴ τὸν Δία.*

[2] Graeculos istos quam graculos.

lest those Choughs should chatter at me that Greek Proverb I have so often mentioned, [1] 'an Asse at a Harp', discoursing Magisterially and Theologically on this Text, 'I speak as a fool, I am more', drew a new Thesis; and, which without the height of Logick he could never have done, made this new Subdivision—For I'll give ye his own words, not onely in form but matter also—, 'I speak like a fool': that is, if you look upon me as a fool for comparing my self with those false Apostles, I shall seem yet a greater fool by esteeming my self before 'em; though the same person a little after, as forgetting himself, runs off to another matter.

But why do I thus staggeringly defend my self with one single instance? As if it were not the common priviledg of Divines to stretch Heaven, that is Holy Writ, like a Cheverel; and when there are many things in St. Paul that thwart themselves, which yet in their proper place do well enough, if there be any credit to be given [2] to St. Jerom, that was Master of five Tongues. Such was that of his at Athens, when having casually espi'd the inscrip-

[1] *Ὄνος λύρας.* [2] Illi *πενταγλώττῳ* Hieronymo.

tion of that Altar, he wrested it into an Argument to prove the Christian Faith, and leaving out all the other words because they made against him, took notice onely of the two last, viz. [1] 'To the unknown God'; and those too, not without some alteration, for the whole Inscription was thus: 'To the Gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa; To the unknown and strange Gods'. And according to his example do [2] the Sons of the Prophets, who, forcing out here and there four or five Expressions and if need be corrupting the sense, wrest it to their own purpose; though what goes before and follows after, make nothing to the matter in hand, nay, be quite against it. Which yet they do with so happy an impudence, that oftentimes the Civilians envie them that faculty.

For what is it in a manner they may not hope for success in, when this great Doctour (I had almost bolted out his name, but that I once agen stand in fear of the Greek Proverb) has made a construction on an expression of Luke, so agreeable to the mind of Christ as are Fire and Water to one another. For when the last point of danger was at hand, at which time

[1] Ignoto Deo. [2] *οἱ τῶν θεολόγων παῖδες.*

retainers and dependants are wont in a more special manner to attend their Protectours, to examine what strength they have, and prepare [1]for the encounter; Christ, intending to take out of his Disciples' minds all trust and confidence in such like defence, demands of them whether they wanted any thing, when he sent them forth so unprovided for a journey, that they had neither shoes to defend their feet from the injuries of stones and briers, nor the provision of a scrip to preserve 'em from hunger. And when they had denied that they wanted any thing, he adds, 'But now, he that hath a bagg, let him take it, and likwise a scrip; and he that hath none, let him sell his coat and buy a sword'. And now when the summe of all that Christ taught [2]prest onely Meekness, Suffering and Contempt of life, who does not clearly perceive what he means in this place? to wit, that he might the more disarm his Ministers, that neglecting not onely Shoos and Scrip but throwing away their very Coat, they might, being in a manner naked, the more readily and with less hindrance take in hand the work of

[1] *συμμαχεῖν.* [2] inculcet.

the Gospel, and provide themselves of nothing but a sword : not such as Thieves and Murtherers go up and down with, but the Sword of the Spirit, that pierceth the most inward parts, and so cuts off as it were at one blow, all earthly affections, that they mind nothing but their duty to God. But see, I pray, whither this famous Theologue wrests it. By the Sword he interprets defence against persecution ; and by the Bagg sufficient provision to carry it on. As if Christ having alter'd his mind, in that he sent out his Disciples not so royally attended as he should have done, repented himself of his former instructions : or as forgetting that he had said, ' Blessed are ye when ye are evil spoken of, despised, and persecuted, &c.', and forbad 'em to resist evil ; for that the meek in Spirit, not the proud, are blessed : or, lest remembring, I say, that he had compar'd them to Sparrows and Lillies, thereby minding them what small care they should take for the things of this life, was so far now from having them go forth without a Sword, that he commanded 'em to get one, though with the sale of their Coat, and had rather they should go naked than want a brawl-

ing-iron by their sides. And to this, as under the word ' Sword ', he conceives to be comprehended whatever appertains to the repelling of injuries ; so under that of ' Scrip ' he takes in whatever is necessary to the support of life. And so does this deep Interpreter of the divine meaning bring forth the Apostles to preach the Doctrine of a crucified Christ, but furnisht at all points with Launces, Slings, Quarter-staffs, and Bombards ; lading 'em also with bag and baggage, lest perhaps it might not be lawful for 'em to leave their Inn unlesse they were empty and fasting. Nor does he take the least notice of this, that he that so will'd the Sword to be bought, reprehends it a little after and commands it to be sheath'd ; and that it was never heard that the Apostles ever us'd or swords or bucklers against the Gentiles, though 'tis likely they had don 't, if Christ had ever intended, as this Doctor interprets.

There is another, too, whose name out of respect I pass by, a man of no small repute, who from those Tents which Habbakkuk mentions, [1]' The Tents of the land of Midian shall tremble ',

[1] Turbabuntur pelles, &c.

drew this Exposition, that it was prophesied of the skin of Saint Bartholomew, who was flay'd alive. And why, forsooth, but because those Tents were cover'd with skins? I was lately my self at a Theological dispute, for I am often there, where when one was demanding, What authority there was in holy Writ that commands Hereticks to be convinc'd by Fire rather than reclaim'd by Argument, a crabbed old fellow, and one whose supercilious gravity spake him at least a Doctor, answered in a great fume that Saint Paul had decreed it, who said, [1]'Reject him that is a Heretick, after once or twice admonition'. And when he had sundry times, one after another, thundred out the same thing, and most men wondred what ailed the man, at last he explain'd it thus, making two words of one: [2]'A Heretick must be put to death'. Some laught, and yet there wanted not others to whom this Exposition seem'd plainly Theological; which, when some, though those very few, oppos'd, they cut off the dispute, [3]as we

[1] Haereticum hominem post unam et alteram correptionem devita. [2] Devita, hoc est de vita, tollendum haereticum.
[3] Tenedia bipenni.

say, with a Hatchet, and the credit of so uncontroulable an Author. 'Pray conceive me', said he; 'it is written, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live". But every Heretick bewitches the people; therefore, &c.' And now, as many as were present admir'd the man's wit, and consequently submitted to his decision of the Question. Nor came it into any of their heads that that Law concern'd onely Fortune-tellers, Enchanters, and Magicians, whom the Hebrews call in their Tongue [1] 'Mecaschephim', Witches or Sorcerers: for otherwise, perhaps, by the same reason it might as well have extended to fornication and drunkenness.

But I foolishly run on in these matters, though yet there are so many of 'em that neither Chrysippus' nor Didymus's Volums are large enough to contain 'em. I would onely desire ye to consider this, that if so great Doctors may be allow'd this liberty, you may the more reasonably pardon even me also, [2] a raw, effeminate Divine, if I quote not every thing so exactly as I should. And so at last I return to Paul. [3] 'Ye willingly' saith he, 'suffer my

[1] מכשפים. [2] *συκίνῃ θεολόγῳ.* [3] Libenter, &c.

foolishness'; and again, 'Take me as a fool'; and further, 'I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly'; and in another place, 'We are fools for Christ's sake'. You have heard from how great an Author how great praises of Folly; and to what other end, but that without doubt he look'd upon 't as that one thing both necessary and profitable. 'If any one amongst ye' saith he, 'seem to be wise, let him be a fool, that he may be wise'. And in Luke, Jesus cal'd those two Disciples, with whom he joyn'd himself upon the way, 'fools'. Nor can I give ye any reason why it should seem so strange, when Saint Paul imputes a kind of folly even to God himself. [1]'The foolishness of God' saith he, 'is wiser than men.' Though yet I must confess that Origen upon the place denies that this foolishness may be resembled to the uncertain judgment of men; of which kind is, that [2]'the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness'.

But why am I so careful to no purpose, that I thus run on to prove my matter by so many testimonies? when in those mystical Psalms,

[1] Quod stultum est Dei, &c. [2] Verbum crucis, &c.

Christ speaking to the Father sayes openly, [1] 'Thou knownest my foolishnesse'. Nor is it without ground that fools are so acceptable to God. The reason perhaps may be this, that as Princes carry a suspicious eye upon those that are over-wise, and consequently hate 'em—as Caesar did Brutus and Cassius, when he fear'd not in the least drunken Antony; so Nero, Seneca; and Dionysius, Plato—, and on the contrary are delighted in those blunter and unlabour'd wits; in like manner Christ ever abhors and condemns [2] those wise men, and such as put confidence in their own wisdome. And this Paul makes clearly out when he said, [3] 'God hath chosen the foolish things of this world'; and when he saith, 'It pleased God by foolishness to save the world', as well knowing it had been impossible to have reform'd it by wisdome. Which also he sufficiently declares himself, crying out by the mouth of his Prophet, 'I will destroy the wisedom of the wise, and cast away the understanding of the prudent'.

And agen, when Christ gives Him thanks that

[1] Tu scis insipientiam meam. [2] *σοφοὺς* istos.
[3] Quae stulta sunt mundi, &c.

he had conceal'd the Mystery of Salvation from the wise, but revealed it to babes and sucklings, that is to say, Fools. For the Greek word for Babes is [1] Fools, which he opposeth to the word [2] Wise men. To this appertains that throughout the Gospel you find him ever accusing the Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the Law, but diligently defending the ignorant multitude (for what other is that 'Woe to ye Scribes and Pharises', than woe to ye, ye wise men?), but seems chiefly delighted in little Children, Women, and Fishers. Besides, among brute Beasts he is best pleas'd with those that have least in 'em of the Foxes subtilty. And therefore he chose rather to ride upon an Asse, when, if he had pleas'd, he might have bestrid the Lion without danger. And the Holy Ghost came down in the shape of a Dove, not of an Eagle or Kite. Add to this that in Scripture there is frequent mention of Harts, Hinds and Lambs; and such as are destin'd to eternal life are called sheep, than which creature there is not any thing more foolish; if we may believe that Proverb of Aristotle [3] 'sheepish manners',

[1] νηπίοις. [2] σοφοῖς. [3] προβάτειον ἦθος.

which he tells us is taken from the foolishness of that creature, and is us'd to be apply'd to dull-headed people and lack-wits. And yet Christ professes to be the Shepheard of this Flock, and is himself delighted with the name of a Lamb ; according to Saint John, ' Behold the Lamb of God ! ' Of which also there is much mention in the Revelation. And what does all this drive at, but that all mankind are fools—nay, even the very best ?

And Christ himself, that he might the better relieve this Folly, being the wisdome of the Father, yet in some manner became a fool, when taking upon him the nature of man, he was found in shape as a man ; as in like manner he was made Sin, that he might heal sinners. Nor did he work this Cure any other way than by the foolishness of the Cross, and a company of fat Apostles, not much better, to whom also he carefully recommended folly, but gave 'em a caution against wisdome, and drew 'em together by the Example of little Children, Lillies, Mustard-seed and Sparrows, things senseless and inconsiderable, living only by the dictates of Nature and without either craft or care. Besides, when

he forbad 'em to be troubled about what they should say before Governors, and straightly charg'd 'em not to enquire after times and seasons, to wit, that they might not trust to their own wisedom but wholly depend on him. And to the same purpose is it that that great Architect of the World, God, gave man an Injunction against his eating of the Tree of Knowledge, as if knowledge were the bane of happinesse; according to which also, St. Paul dis-allows it as puffing up and destructive; whence also St. Bernard seems in my opinion to follow, when he interprets that mountain whereon Lucifer had fixt his habitation, to be the mountain of knowledge.

Nor perhaps ought I to omit this other argument, that folly is so gracious above, that her errors are only pardoned, those of wise men never. Whence it is that they that ask forgiveness, though they offend never so wittingly, cloak it yet with the excuse of folly. So Aaron, in Numbers, if I mistake not the book, when he sues unto Moses concerning his Sister's leprosie, [1] 'I beseech thee, my Lord, not to lay this sin

[1] Obsecro, Domine mi, &c.

upon us, which we have foolishly committed'. So Saul makes his excuse to David, 'For behold', saith he, 'I did it foolishly'. And again, David himself thus sweetens God, 'And therefore I beseech thee, O Lord, to take away the trespass of thy Servant, for I have done foolishly'; as if he knew there was no pardon to be obtain'd unlesse he had colour'd his offence with folly and ignorance. And stronger is that of Christ upon the Cross when he pray'd for his enemies, 'Father forgive them'; nor does he cover their crime with any other excuse than that of unwittingnesse—because, saith he, 'they know not what they do'. In like manner Paul, writing to Timothy, 'But therefore I obtain'd mercy, for that I did it ignorantly through unbelief'. And what is the meaning of 'I did it ignorantly' but that I did it out of folly, not malice? And what of, 'Therefore I receiv'd mercy', but that I had not obtain'd it, had I not been made more allowable through the covert of folly? For us also makes that mystical Psalmist, though I remembred it not in its right place, 'Remember not the sins of my youth nor my ignorances'. You see what two things he pretends, to wit,

Youth, whose companion I ever am, and Ignorances, and that in the plural number, a number of multitude, whereby we are to understand that there was no small company of 'em.

But not to run too far in that which is infinite. To speak briefly, all Christian Religion seems to have a kind of allyance with folly, and in no respect to have any accord with wisedom. Of which if ye expect proofs, consider first that boyes, old men, women and fools are more delighted with religious and sacred things than others, and to that purpose are ever next the Altars; and this they do by meer impulse of Nature. And in the next place, you see that those first founders of it were plain, simple persons, and most bitter enemies of Learning. Lastly there are no sort of fools seem more out of the way than are these whom the zeal of Christian Religion has once swallow'd up; so that they waste their estates, neglect injuries, suffer themselves to be cheated, put no difference between friends and enemies, abhor pleasure, are cram'd with poverty, watchings, tears, labours, reproaches, loathe life, and wish death above all things; in short, they seem senseless to common understanding, as if their

minds liv'd elsewhere and not in their own bodies; which, what else is it than to be mad? For which reason you must not think it so strange if the Apostles seem'd to be drunk with new wine, and if Paul appear'd to Festus to be mad.

But now, having once gotten on [1] the Lion's skin, go to, and I'll shew ye that this happinesse of Christians, which they pursue with so much toil, is nothing else but a kind of madnesse and folly; far be it that my words should give any offence, rather consider my matter. And first, the Christians and Platonicks do as good as agree in this, that the Soul is plung'd and fetter'd in the prison of the body, by the grossnesse of which it is so ty'd up and hinder'd, that it cannot take a view of or enjoy things as they truly are; and for that cause their master defines Philosophy to be a contemplation of death, because it takes off the mind from visible and corporeal objects, than which death does no more. And therefore, as long as the Soul useth the Organs of the Body in that right manner it ought, so long it is said to be in good state and condition; but when, having broke its fetters, it endeavours to

[1] τὴν λεοντῆν.

get loose, and assayes, as it were, a flight out of that prison that holds it in, they call it madness; and if this happen through any distemper, or indisposition of the organs, then, by the common consent of every man, 'tis down-right madnesse. And yet we see such kind of men foretell things to come, understand Tongues and Letters they never learnt before, and seem, as it were, big with a kind of Divinity. Nor is it to be doubted but that it proceeds from hence, that the mind, being somewhat at liberty from the infection of the body, begins to put forth it self in its native vigour. And I conceive 'tis from the same cause that the like often happens to sick men a little before their death, that they discourse in strain above mortality, as if they were inspir'd. Agen, if this happens upon the score of Religion, though perhaps it may not be the same kind of madness, yet 'tis so near it that a great many men would judge it no better, especially when a few inconsiderable people shall differ from the rest of the world in the whole course of their life. And therefore it fares with them, as, according to the Fiction of Plato, happens to those that being coopt up in a cave stand gaping with

admiration at the shadows of things; and that fugitive who, having broke from 'em and returning to 'em agen, told 'em he had seen things truly as they were, and that they were the most mistaken in believing there was nothing but pitiful shadows. For as this wise man pitty'd and bewail'd their palpable madness that were possest with so grosse an error, so they in return laught at him as a doating fool, and cast him out of their company. In like manner the common sort of men chiefly admire those things that are most corporeal, and almost believe there is nothing beyond 'em. Whereas on the contrary, these devout persons, by how much the nearer any thing concerns the body, by so much the more they neglect it, and are wholly hurry'd away with the contemplation of things invisible. For the one give the first place to riches, the next to their corporal pleasures, leaving the last place to their soul; which yet most of 'em do scarce believe, because they can't see it with their eyes. On the contrary, the others first rely wholly on God, the most unchangeable of all things; and next him, yet on this that comes nearest him, they bestow the second on their

soul; and lastly, for their body, they neglect that care, and contemn and fly monies as superfluity that may be well spar'd; or if they are forc't to meddle with any of these things, they do it carelesly and much against their wills, having as if they had it not, and possessing as if they possessed it not.

There are also in each several things several degrees wherein they disagree among themselves. And first as to the senses, though all of 'em have more or lesse affinity with the body, yet of these some are more gross and blockish, as tasting, hearing, seeing, smelling, touching; some more remov'd from the body, as memory, intellect, and the will. And therefore to which of these the mind applies its self, in that lyes its force. But holy men, because the whole bent of their minds is taken up with those things that are most repugnant to these grosser senses, they seem brutish and stupid in the common use of them. Whereas on the contrary, the ordinary sort of people are best at these, and can do least at to'ther; from whence it is, as we have heard, that some of these holy men have by mistake drunk oil for wine. Agen, in the affections of

the mind, some have a greater commerce with the body than others, as lust, desire of meat and sleep, anger, pride, envy; with which holy men are at irreconcilable enmity, and contrary, the common people think there's no living without 'em. And lastly there are certain middle kind of affections, and as it were natural to every man, as the love of one's Country, Children, Parents, Friends, and to which the common people attribute no small matter; whereas to'ther strive to pluck 'em out of their mind: unlesse insomuch as they arrive to that highest part of the soul, that they love their Parents not as Parents—for what did they get but the body? though yet we owe it to God, not them—but as good men or women, and in whom shines the Image of that highest wisdom, which alone they call the chiefest good, and out of which, they say, there is nothing to be belov'd or desir'd.

And by the same rule do they measure all things else, so that they make lesse account of whatever is visible, unlesse it be altogether contemptible, than of those things which they cannot see. But they say that in Sacraments and other religious Duties there is both body and

Spirit. As in fasting they count it not enough for a man to abstain from eating, which the common people take for an absolute Fast, unlesse there be also a lessening of his deprav'd affections : as that he be lesse angry, less proud, than he was wont, that the Spirit, being less clog'd with its bodily weight, may be the more intent upon heavenly things. In like manner, in the Eucharist, though, say they, it is not to be esteem'd the less that 'tis administer'd with Ceremonies, yet of its self 'tis of little effect, if not hurtful, unless that which is spiritual be added to it, to wit, that which is represented under those visible signes. Now the death of Christ is represented by it, which all men, vanquishing, abolishing and, as it were, burying their carnal affections, ought to express in their lives and conversations, that they may grow up to a newness of life, and be one with him, and the same one amongst another. This a holy man does, and in this is his only meditation. Whereas on the contrary, the common people think there's no more in that Sacrifice than to be present at the Altar, and crow'd next it, to have a noise of words and look upon the Ceremonies. Nor

in this alone, which we onely propos'd by way of example, but in all his life, and without hypocrisie, does a holy man fly those things that have any alliance with the body, and is wholly ravisht with things Eternal, Invisible, and Spiritual. For which cause there's so great contrariety of opinion between 'em, and that too in every thing, that each party thinks the other out of their wits ; though that character, in my judgment, better agrees with those holy men than the common people : which yet will be more clear if, as I promis'd, I briefly shew ye that that great reward they so much fancy is nothing else but a kind of madness.

And therefore suppose that Plato dreamt of somewhat like it when he call'd the madness of Lovers the most happy condition of all others. For he that's violently in Love lives not in his own body, but in the thing he loves ; and by how much the farther he runs from himself into another, by so much the greater is his pleasure. And then, when the mind strives to rove from its body, and does not rightly use its own organs, without doubt you may say 'tis downright madnesse and not be mistaken, or otherwise what's

the meaning of those common sayings, [1] 'He does not dwell at home', 'Come to your self', 'He's his own man again'? Besides, the more perfect and true his love is, the more pleasant is his madness. And therefore, what is that life hereafter, after which these holy minds so pantingly breathe, like to be? To wit, the Spirit shall swallow up the Body, as conqueror and more durable; and this it shall do with the greater ease because heretofore, in its life-time, it had cleans'd and thinn'd it into such another nothing as its self. And then the Spirit agen shall be wonderfully swallow'd up by that highest mind, as being more powerful than infinite parts; so that the whole man is to be out of himself, nor to be otherwise happy in any respect, but that being stript of himself, he shall participate of somewhat ineffable from that chiefest good that draws all things into its self. And this happiness though 'tis only then perfected when souls being joyn'd to their former bodies shall be made immortal, yet forasmuch as the life of holy men is nothing but a continu'd meditation and, as it were, shadow of that life, it so happens that

[1] Non est apud se: Ad te redi: Sibi redditus est.

at length they have some taste or relish of it; which, though it be but as the smallest drop in comparison of that fountain of eternal happiness, yet it far surpasses all worldly delight, though all the pleasures of all mankind were all joyn'd together. So much better are things spiritual than things corporal, and things invisible than things visible; which doubtless is that which the Prophet promiseth: 'The eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor has it entred into the heart of man to consider what God has provided for them that love Him'. And this is that Mary's better part, which is not taken away by change of life, but perfected.

And therefore they that are sensible of it, and few there are to whom this happens, suffer a kind of somewhat little differing from madness; for they utter many things that do not hang together, and that too not after the manner of men, but make a kind of sound which they neither heed themselves, nor is it understood by others, and change the whole figure of their countenance, one while jocund, another while dejected, now weeping, then laughing, and agen sighing. And when they come to themselves,

tell ye they know not where they have been, whether in the body or out of the body, or sleeping ; nor do they remember what they have heard, seen, spoken or done, and only know this, as it were in a mist or dream, that they were the most happy while they were so out of their wits. And therefore they are sorry they are come to themselves agen, and desire nothing more than this kind of madnesse, to be perpetually mad. And this is a small taste of that future happiness.

But I forget my self and [1] run beyond my bounds. Though yet, if I shall seem to have spoken any thing more boldly or impertinently than I ought, be pleas'd to consider that not only Folly but a Woman said it ; remembring in the mean time that Greek Proverb, [2] 'Sometimes a fool may speak a word in season', unlesse perhaps you'll say this concerns not Women. I see you expect an Epilogue, but give me leave to tell ye you are much mistaken if you think I remember any thing of what I have said, having foolishly bolted out such a hodg podg of words.

[1] *ὑπὲρ τὰ ἐσκαμμένα πηδῶ.*

[2] *Πολλάκι τοι καὶ μωρὸς ἀνὴρ κατακαίριον εἶπεν.*

'Tis an old Proverb, [1]'I hate one that remembers what's done over the Cup'. This is a new one of my own making: [2]I hate a man that remembers what he hears. Wherefore farewell, clap your hands, live, and drink lustick, my most excellent Disciples of Folly.

ΤΕΛΟΣ. FINIS

[1] Μισῶ μνάμονα συμπόταν. [2] Μισῶ μνάμονα ἀκροατήν.

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